

Coaching From an Adult Learning Perspective

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Tiivistelmä - Referat - Abstract <p>The aim of this study is to examine coaching from an adult learning perspective and to form an understanding what kind of adult learning processes are involved in coaching. In addition, the purpose is also to form an understanding of potential elements that contribute to learning and elements that can slow down, or even hinder learning. Related to this is the exploration of methods and tools used by coaches to facilitate the learning experience.</p> <p>The research data for this qualitative research was collected by interviewing seven ICF coach practitioners. Theory-guided content analysis was used to analyse the interview material. Andragogy, experiential learning and transformative learning were used as reference theories that could possible explain the findings from the research material.</p> <p>The findings show that the adult learning processes that are at play in coaching are related to reflective activity, which create awareness that then trigger action. An action with successful outcome, a tested hypothesis proves effective, creates a durable and concrete change, or transformation, in the way of thinking and or acting in the person. All three adult learning theories, that provided the framework for this study, were found to be relevant in one way or the other. None of the theories could alone explain the learning processes that happen in coaching. Andragogy provides a good framework for the overall practical process steps in coaching. Experiential learning provides a good framework in explaining the process of reflective thought, hypothesis testing and action. Transformative learning, on the other hand, provide an understanding of the processes that happen when the testing of hypothesis succeed and transformation occurs in the learner.</p> <p>The fundamentals elements contributing to a positive coaching experience were found to be several. Client's aptitude for coaching, coach's professionalism, a good dyadic relation based on trust and external support from manager and organization were among the important contributing factors.</p>		
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Tiivistelmä - Referat - Abstract <p>Målet med denna studie är att undersöka coaching ur ett vuxenpedagogiskt perspektiv och att förstå vilken typ av vuxenpedagogiska processer som är involverade i coaching. Dessutom är syftet att bilda en förståelse för potentiella element som bidrar till lärande och element som kan bromsa eller till och med hindra lärande. Relaterat till detta är utforskningen av vilka metoder och verktyg som de intervjuade coacherna möjligen använder sig av för att underlätta inläringen.</p> <p>Forskningsdata för denna kvalitativa forskning samlades in genom att intervjua sju ICF coachar. Teoriinriktad innehållsanalys användes för att analysera intervjumaterialet. Andragogik, upplevelsebaserat lärande och transformativt lärande användes som referensteorier som möjligen kunde förklara resultaten som kommer fram ur analys av forskningsmaterialet.</p> <p>Resultaten visar att de vuxna inlärningsprocesserna gällande i coaching är relaterade till reflekterande processer som skapar medvetenhet som sedan resulterar i handling. En handling med vilken man når önskat resultat, testet av en hypotes är visar sig vara positivt, skapar sedan en hållbar och konkret förändring, eller transformation, i sättet att tänka och eller agera hos personen ifråga.</p> <p>Alla tre referensteorier visade sig på ett eller annat sätt vara relevanta. Ingen av teorierna kunde ensamt förklara de inlärningsprocesser som sker i coaching. Andragogiken ger en bra ram för de övergripande praktiska stegen i coaching processen. Upplevelsebaserat lärande ger en bra ram för att förklara processen för reflekterande tänkande, hypotesprövning och handling. Transformativt lärande återigen ger en förståelse för de processer som händer när provande av hypotesen lyckas och transformation sker i den som lär sig</p> <p>Fler element bidrog till en positiv coaching upplevelse. Kundens lämplighet för coaching, coachens professionalitet, en god dyadisk relation baserad på förtroende och externt stöd från chef och organisation var bland de viktigaste bidragande faktorerna.</p>		
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1 Introduction

Coaching is increasingly popular and many companies use coaches to support their employees' and executive's professional development. (Cox, Bachkirova, & Clutterbuck, 2014, p. 1; Ciporen, 2015, p. 5, Dunlop, 2017; Gray, 2006, p. 475; Feldman & Lankau, 2005, p. 829). The purpose of coaching is to support people in working life to perform better and to help them to better handle and manage different situations at work. The core idea of coaching is to use the client's own resources. This means that the client finds the answers to their questions or problems. The coach only supports and challenges the client to find the best practices for each situation. The idea is also that the client understands their own strengths so that they can take action towards the change they want (Gerlofson & Lindberg, 2017, p. 92).

Coaching is frequently confused with mentoring and counselling and even with consultancy. Mentoring is often performed internal in an organization where a more experienced manager provides support for a less experienced colleague. Often the mentor is also thought of as a role model. A central mechanism in mentoring is that the mentor can draw upon their own experiences. Commonly, a mentor has not received training. Consultants, on the other hand, can for instance study a situation and create strategies. In coaching the clients create and commit to their own strategies. According to Gray (2006, p. 477) "buy in" into the process by clients is more likely to happen this way. Coaching is result-focused, forward-looking and concentrated on concrete goals (Gerlofson & Lindberg, 2017, p. 136; Rogers, 2016, pp. 133-134) whereas counselling supports people in coming to terms with their past and to move out of crisis (Gray, 2006, p. 477). The role of the coach can thus be seen as the role of a change agent. The coach guides clients through a transient journey. The coach helps people to become confident and committed. The coach also helps people sustain their drive and commitment. A coach sees change as a resource and a benefit and not as a threat (Gray, 2006, p. 478).

The term *coach* was initially used in the 16th century to describe a certain kind of carriage that took people where they wanted to go. In many senses, the idea of a journey towards a desired destination describes well the process and goals of coaching today (Gray, 2006, p. 476). The idea and philosophy of coaching has a long tradition (Ciporen, 2015, p. 5) even if the current approach to coaching became popular in the 1980s. The roots of coaching can be said to be in ancient Greece and the Socratic method of asking questions to encourage self-discovery. Furthermore, Eastern philosophers, different fields in

psychology and organization, as well as leadership development, are a few of the disciplines that have influenced modern coaching practises (Brock, 2014, pp. 4-8). The birth of modern executive and business coaching emerged from practices such as leadership and supervisory development, sports coaching, and personal development training in the 1980s. Tim Gallwey's Inner Game approach played a central role in developing coaching in 1980 (Brock, 2019, p. 30). Tim Gallwey was originally a successful tennis coach. During his career as a coach he discovered what he defined as “the inner game process” related to how players achieved peak performances. He further developed his approach and became a consultant offering his services to major corporations worldwide (Evered & Selman, 1989, pp. 25-26). In this way his approach that was initially used in sports was also introduced into coaching in the field of business. In 1990 coaching gained further popularity and the growing media coverage assisted in this development. (Brock, 2019, p. 31).

Even though coaching has become mainstream, it can still be considered an emerging discipline. This can be realised when trying to find a general description of what coaching actually is (Kemp, Grant & Cavanagh, 2005, p. 3; Ives, 2008, p.100; Ciporen, 2015, pp. 5, 7; Passmore & Fillery-Travis, 2011, p. 4). For example, some scholars argue that psychologists are the most qualified to conduct business coaching because of their training. Others, however, argue that a business and management background is crucial in business coaching and therefore persons with this background are the best to conduct coaching (Feldman & Lankau, 2005, p. 832). There is, however, little consensus on the matter. What is undisputed is that practised business coaching is a wide-ranging blend of concepts and methods borrowed from adult education, management training, industrial and organisational psychology, and generic consultation skills (Schutte, 2019, p. 1; Passmore & Fillery-Travis, 2011, p. 4; Gray, 2006, p. 475).

The increased demand for coaching is drawing new practitioners to the field. Since coaching is not regulated, persons from many backgrounds have become coaches. Sometimes they exercise this activity in addition to other activities and services that they are already performing. The result of coaches coming from different backgrounds often means that coaching can be done quite differently. Things like theoretical orientation, interests and skills of the coach are some of the ingredients that can mean that coaches are approaching the practise of coaching from very different angles. Schutte (2019, p. 1) puts forward that a serious concern related to coaching is that many practitioners do not have coach-specific training. My own reflection here is that when a researcher wants to conduct research about coaching, research reliability might be compromised if the

coaches do not have any coach-specific training. I will discuss this further in the Theoretical background chapter.

Coaching associations have been formed to alleviate the problem of not knowing what to be expected of a coach. Within business coaching, there are a number of industry organizations. These are the International Coaching Federation (ICF), the International Coaching Community (ICC), the European Mentoring and Coaching Council (EMCC) and the Association for Coaching (AC) (Gerlofson & Lindberg, 2017, pp. 19-20).

This work focuses on one-on-one business coaching. This means that the focus is on coaching in a business or organizational setting. Other terms used for one-on-one business coaching are for instance executive and organizational coaching (Ciporen, 2015, p.9). Coaching involves some kind of a change in the person who receives coaching. One can argue that with change comes also learning. From an educational science point of view the inevitable question is: what kind of learning does coaching involve?

The aim of this work is to explore and create an understanding of what kind of learning is involved in coaching. Consequently, the question of factors facilitating progress and inhibiting progress become interesting. These questions lead to the research questions of this work. The first is which adult learning processes and phenomena are at play in coaching. Moreover, this work seeks to answer what the enablers and inhibitors affecting the coaching outcome are.

2 Theoretical background

As discussed in the previous chapter, coaching is still an emerging discipline. Gray (2006, p. 476) notes that there is no clear agreement on the exact definition of what coaching is. He notes that according to some it is “the art of facilitating the performance, learning and development of another”, while an additional view is that it is about “optimizing people’s potential and performance”. Still one view is that it is “a form of tailored work-related development for senior and professional managers which spans business, functional and personal skills (Gray, 2006, p. 476).

According to the International Coach Federation “Coaching is a thought-provoking and creative partnership that inspires clients to maximize their personal and professional potential, often unlocking previously untapped sources of imagination, productivity and leadership.” (ICF, nda). Gray (2006, p. 476) notes that ICF perceives coaching as a process that is designed to help clients increase their learning, performance, and enhance their quality of life. An important observation that Gray is making is that the coach in this context is not necessarily an “expert” or an “authority”. The coach is involved in a partnership and collaboration with the client. The client, however, holds the ultimate responsibility for, and ownership of, the desired outcomes.

In an attempt to standardize and streamline the coaching experience, ICF has developed a set of coaching ethics and rules for core competencies. Internalising of these rules is part of the learning agenda for a coach who takes part in ICF accredited coaching education (ICF (n.d.b). *Regulation, Standards and Practices* and ICF, 2015.). (See Appendix 1 ICF Core Competencies and Appendix 3).

Gray (2006, p. 475) argues rightfully that there are no internationally recognized qualification or professional standards related to coaching and how it should be performed. I believe that this makes ICF standards and rules for coaches even more important. They assure at least some degree of uniformity and consistency of background and way-of-working for the coaching that takes place by ICF credentialed coaches.

Due to the ambiguity of the term “coach” and its meaning, I will use the term “coach” to refer to professional coaches that are credentialed by the International Coach Federation.

2.1 Point of departure of the research

The point of departure of this research is to explore coaching from the perspective of the coach. The focus is on coaches' perception of what takes place when they coach and what mechanisms are at play. The aim is to form a picture of the factors that facilitate the client to progress and attain his or her goals and, on the other hand, what are the factors that possibly inhibit the client from attaining goals. My reasoning is that coaching is largely about adult learning and the theoretical framework below will be used to explore what kind of adult learning is at play in coaching.

2.2 Previous research, background theories and framework

As mentioned earlier, coaching is an emerging discipline and can be seen as a discipline that applies knowledge from many different fields of study like social psychology, learning theory, theories of human and organizational development (Cox, Bachkirova, & Clutterbuck, 2014, p. 1).

Coaching can be explored from two different, but interlinked, angles or dimensions. The first is related to the focus that coaching takes (Cox, Bachkirova, & Clutterbuck, 2014, p. 5) and the other angle is which approach, or theoretical framework, is applied in coaching (Ives 2008, pp. 101-102 and Cox, Bachkirova, & Clutterbuck, 2014, pp. 10-13).

According to Gray (2006, p. 483), adult learning theories offer a good platform to use in observing coaching, since these theories highlight learner's self-determination, self-actualization and self-transformation. Knowles coined the word "andragogy" to distinguish adult learners from other learners. His view is that adult learners are autonomous and self-directed learners that assume accountability of their own learning and progress. Teaching in such a context is not about what traditionally is thought to be teaching. Instead, it is about facilitation and enabling a constructive dialogue.

Knowles' thoughts almost inevitably make me think of John Dewey. Not surprisingly Gray (2006, p. 484) put forward the notion that Dewey was the first to present the idea that "learning was concerned with experience rather than just the acquisition of abstract knowledge". Another view is put forward by Jarvis (2010, p. 29) who argues that knowledge can be divided into four types. Namely facts, data, information and knowledge. Of these four types, only knowledge is learned. The other three are objective and remaining outside the person.

Based on Ken Wilber's (2000, pp. 61-65) four quadrants' model Cox, Bachkirova, and Clutterbuck suggest a four-dimensional model for understanding and studying coaching illustrated in figure 1 (Cox, et. al, 2014, p. 5) below. The authors define the viewpoints with "I, We, It and Its". "I" is characterized by a first-person viewpoint on the coaching process. It describes the individual experiences of both the coach and coachee. "We" emphasizes the second person viewpoint in the relationship between the coach and the client and the focus is on the role that language and culture play in the interaction. "It" highlights the more tangible elements of the coaching process and involves for instance particular interventions and tools used and specific behaviours and models. These can be observed and even measured by a third party. "Its" are the contextual structures that are present in one form or the other and which influence the coaching process. Examples of such contextual structures are the sponsoring organizations, other social groups and professional groups.

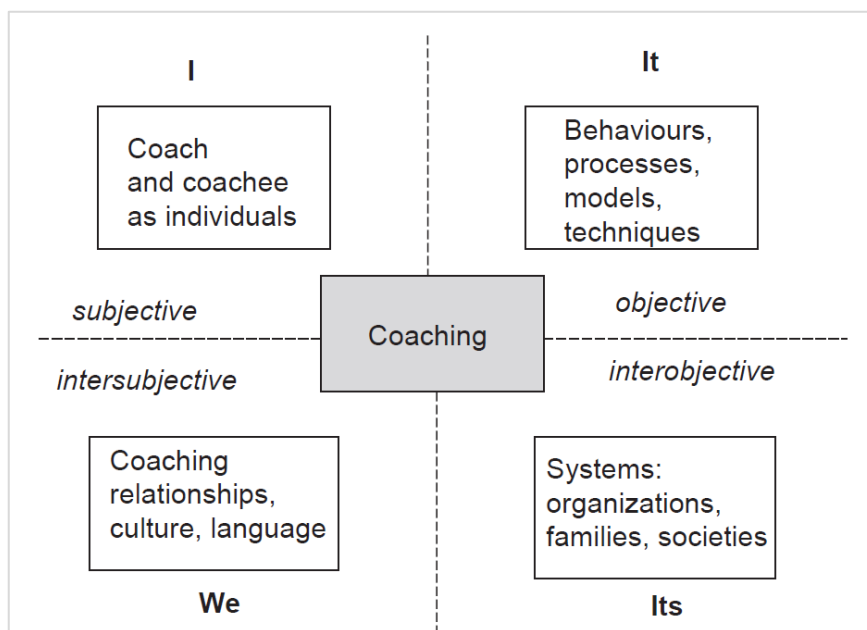


Figure 1. The four dimensions of coaching

Even if coaches give more weight to a certain dimension it does not mean that they would not utilise aspects from all four dimensions in their coaching according to Cox, Bachkirova and Clutterbuck (2014, p. 5).

Cox's, Bachkirova's, and Clutterbuck's model might be useful for a coach or a coachee to understand the variety of aspects that are at play in coaching. However, the model can hardly be seen as a useful tool for studying coaching, especially when learning

processes in coaching are studied. At most, it can be used to classify different aspects when coaching is studied.

Ives (2008, p. 100), on the other hand, suggests three main dimensions through which coaching can be studied. These are directive or non-directive, personal-developmental or goal-focused and therapeutic or performance-driven approaches. Coaching is goal-oriented and should therefore be seen as a unique coaching paradigm, with three key characteristics. Namely that goal-oriented coaching is non-directive, goal-focused and performance-driven. The International Coach Federation's core coaching competencies (ICF, n.d.c) focus heavily on these three aspects in coaching and especially part *D. Facilitating Learning and Results* emphasises heavily the aspect of focusing on the goal and being performance-driven (see Appendix 1 ICF Core Competencies).

Ives (2008, pp. 101-102) lists nine different disciplines of coaching approaches, that fall into one of the aforementioned three main coaching approaches. These are Coaching from a humanist perspective, behaviour-based approach, adult-development approach, cognitive coaching, adult learning approach, a positive psychology model, an adventure-based model, systemic approach and goal-oriented approach. With the perspective of the ICF definition of coaching and defined core coaching competencies the behaviour based, adult learning and goal-oriented approaches seem to be the most relevant (ICF, n.d.c).

In the behaviour-based approach, the focus is on the future and the urge to generate change in real-life contexts. Emphasis is on personal development and need for client's learning. The adult learning approach emphasizes deep learning and involves theories like andragogy, reflective practice and experiential learning. The argument that adults learn by reflecting on experiences and apply them to new situations is fundamental to the approach. Transformative learning is applied when the coach seeks to help the coachee's to question his or her assumptions using critical reflection. The goal-oriented approach is heavily focused on the goal or solution through primarily developing self-regulation (Ives, 2008, pp.101 -102).

Cox et al. (2014, pp. 10-13 and 2010, pp. 68-77) mention several theoretical traditions in coaching. These are the psychodynamic approach to coaching, cognitive behavioural coaching, solution-focused coaching, the person-centred approach, the Gestalt approach, existential coaching, ontological coaching, narrative coaching, psychological development in adulthood and coaching, transpersonal approach, transactional analysis

and coaching and NPL approach. The cognitive behavioural coaching, solution-focused coaching and the positive psychology approach are the closest to ICF coaching definition regarding coaching and core coaching competencies.

Cox et al. (2010, pp. 6-7) argues that adult learning theory is the foundation of all coaching practice. The authors acknowledge that there is a large number of existing theories. However, Cox et al. (2010) identify three theories that are particularly relevant to coaching: andragogy, transformational learning and experimental learning.

In defining *learning* they refer to Knowles, Holton and Swanson as follows:

The extension and clarification of meaning of one's experience'. This, it seems to us, is the implicit theme for our clients in any coaching encounter. The concept of change, which is at the heart of coaching, is also inherent in the concept of learning. Any discernible change in behaviour or cognitive development suggests that learning has taken place. (Cox et al., 2010, p. 6)

Knowles et al. (2005, p. 10) argue that the term *learning*, in contrast to education, draws attention to the person in whom the change occurs or is expected to occur. Through the act or process of learning, behavioural change happens. As a result, knowledge, skills, and attitudes are acquired. Knowles et al. (2005, p. 11) contends that it is sometimes difficult to define the term learning with precision. In any case, they present a working definition for learning:

Key components of learning theorists' definitions of learning serve as the foundation for our discussion of the definition of learning. These include change, filling a need, learning as product, learning as process, learning as function, natural growth, control, shaping, development of competencies, fulfillment of potential, personal involvement, self-initiated, learner-evaluated, independent learning, and learning domains. We define learning as the process of gaining knowledge and/or expertise. (Knowles et al., 2005, p. 17)

Cox et al. (2014, p. 6) have selected to use one of the definitions brought forward by Knowles et al. (2005, p. 11), i.e. "the extension and clarification of meaning of one's experience" (Cox et al., 2014, p. 6). Cox et al. (2014, p. 6) see that the definition encompasses the implicit nature of any coaching encounter. As we have seen they argue that at the core of coaching is change. Change is also a characteristic of learning. Visible change for instance in behaviour or attitudes is evidence of the fact that learning has occurred. However, the reference Cox et al. make to Knowles et al. is not without complications. Actually Knowles et al. are referring to the view that Robert Smith puts forward in his book *Learning How to Learn* (Smith, 1982). Knowles et al. (2005, p. 11) mention three different definitions related to learning that Smith present and Cox et al. pick only

one of these. In addition, Knowles et al. (2005, pp. 10 – 16) go through numerous researchers' views. As a summary, they acknowledge the difference between the term education, which highlights the educator, and learning that focus on "the person in whom the change occurs or is expected to occur" (Knowles et al., 2005, p. 16). Eventually, they "define learning as the process of gaining knowledge and/or expertise" (Knowles et al., 2005, p. 17).

Dewey point out that there are two meanings to the word "learning":

On one hand, learning is the sum total of what is known, as that is handed down by books and learned men. It is something external, an accumulation of cognitions as one might store material commodities in a warehouse. Truth exists ready-made somewhere. Study is then the process by which an individual draws on what is in storage. On the other hand, learning means something which the individual *does* when he studies. It is an active, personally conducted affair. The dualism here is between knowledge as something external, or, as it is often called, objective, and knowing as something purely internal, subjective, psychical.

There is, on one side, a body of truth, ready-made, and, on the other, a ready-made mind equipped with a faculty of knowing — if it only wills to exercise it, which it is often strangely loath to do. The separation, often touched upon, between subject matter and method is the educational equivalent of this dualism. Socially the distinction has to do with the part of life which is dependent upon authority and that where individuals are free to advance. (Dewey, 1967, pp. 334-335)

Based on the examination above, I have selected theories that I consider to best function as sounding boards in this work. These theories are Andragogy, Experiential learning and Transformative learning. I will therefore explore these theories in more depth in the following chapters.

2.2.1 Andragogy

The andragogy model is a process model. This distinguishes it from the traditional content models where the educator decides beforehand what knowledge or what kind of skills the receiver need to learn. The "teacher" in the andragogy model is seen as a facilitator, consultant or change agent (Knowles et al., 2005, p. 115). The process involves the following elements according to Knowles et al.:

(1) preparing the learner; (2) establishing a climate conducive to learning; (3) creating a mechanism for mutual planning; (4) diagnosing the needs for learning; (5) formulating program objectives (which is content) that will satisfy these needs; (6) designing a pattern of learning experiences; (7) conducting these learning experiences with suitable techniques and materials; and (8) evaluating the learning outcomes and rediagnosing learning needs. (Knowles et al., 2005, p. 115)

The original model contained seven steps, but in 1995 Knowles added a step, namely the first step, *preparing the learner*. It was added as it became evident that the learner

had a vital and central role in the process. The process relies on the self-directedness of the learner. Traditionally the educational system has not fostered this aspect. Thus the adult learner seldom is prepared for this approach. To describe this phenomenon, Knowles et al. use the term “culture-shock” that needs to be mitigated. The step prepares the learner by explaining concepts such as being a proactive learner, identifying the resources the learner already possesses and establishing a collaborative relationship (Knowles et al., 2005, p. 117).

One of the key points in the philosophy of andragogy is expressed in these sentences:

One of the basic findings of applied behavioral science research is that people tend to feel committed to a decision or activity in direct proportion to their participation in or influence on its planning and decision making. The reverse is even more relevant: People tend to feel uncommitted to any decision or activity that they feel is being imposed on them without their having a chance to influence it. (Knowles et al., 2005, p. 123).

The learner’s own ideas and desires of what he or she wants to achieve and wants to become are crucial. In building a model of competencies, it is also important that the learner define at what level she, or he, wants to perform (Knowles et al., 2005, p. 124).

Knowles et al. point out that the “excellence” of the model as such is not the most important thing. What is important is the change in the mindset of the learner. The realisation of how acquired knowledge and skills will enhance their ability to perform better in life is important. That is when the learning situations give a clear sense of purpose and the learning becomes truly personal (Knowles et al., 2005, p. 125).

The definition of the learning need is in the hands of the learner as Knowles describes it:

A learning need can be defined as the discrepancy or gap between the competencies specified in the model and their present level of development by the learners. According to andragogy, the critical element in the assessment of the gaps is the learners’ own perception of the discrepancy between where they are now and where they want (and need) to be. So the assessment is essentially a self-assessment, with the human resource developer providing the learners with the tools and procedures for obtaining data and making responsible judgments about their level of development of the competencies. (Knowles et al., 2005, pp. 125-126)

Based on Knowles and andragogy Cox (2006, pp. 29-30) derived six main principles which are observable in coaching and linked to andragogy. These are:

1. *Adults need to know.* Adult learning is a collaborative event and adults need to know what they will be learning. Moreover, they are independent learners, e.g. the adult learner needs to own the agenda in a coaching situation.
2. *Adults are self-directed.* Adult learning is typically about facilitation and treating the adult learner as an equal and with respect for what they know and how they wish to learn.
3. *Adults have a wealth of prior experience.* The experience can work as a facilitator or an inhibitor. Old mental models and schemas can inhibit the adult from learning new practices and things. The coach's role to challenge existing assumptions is crucial in these situations in order to encourage unlearning and learning.
4. *Adults learn when they have a need to learn.* Readiness to learn is often linked with a life situation that creates a need to learn and solve an upcoming problem. For the coach this means that understanding client's life situation and their readiness for coaching is crucial information.
5. *Adults are relevancy-oriented.* Adults often have a problem-solving approach and want to be able to apply what they have learnt. Cox suggests that this means that the client might want to work on immediate, rather than on longer term, issues.
6. *Adults are internally motivated.* Adults are normally motivated by learning to solve problems they personally consider being relevant. Due to this, the coach can help the coachee to understand and identify the deeper needs and values that then consequently can reinforce desired change.

2.2.2 Experiential learning

John Dewey's experiential learning theory has been further developed by David Kolb (Kolb & Kolb, 2005, p. 193; Cox et. al, 2014, p. 35). Miettinen (2000, p. 54) notes that in addition to North America, experiential learning, has also played an important role in the theoretical tradition of adult education in Europe and Australia.

Kolb state that his experiential learning theory is based on "the work of prominent 20th century scholars who gave experience a central role in their theories of human learning and development - notably John Dewey, Kurt Lewin, Jean Piaget, William James, Carl Jung, Paulo Freire, Carl Rogers and others". Experiential learning is a process-based, multilinear model which explains adult development according to Kolb and Kolb (2005, p. 194). Reijo Miettinen (2000) rejects starkly the claims that Kolb is making when he states that his theoretical framework of experimental learning is based upon Dewey. According to Miettinen the references to any of the persons above are weak and seemingly

very purposefully selected by Kolb (Miettinen, 2000, p. 56). The question remains if, irrespective of Miettinen's claim, there is anything to take away from Kolb's theory. In addition to take into consideration Miettinen's criticism, I will also examine Dewey's texts.

Dewey (1953, pp. 12-13) makes a valid point when he argues that even though experience is the base of any genuine education, it does not mean that all experiences are educative. In fact, some experiences can even restrict further learning. Dewey calls these experiences "mis-educative" experiences. Experiences are also connected with usually being either pleasant or unpleasant and the lived experiences will influence future experiences whether we like it or not, or as Dewey puts it "...every experience lives on in further experiences" (Dewey, 1953, p. 16).

Miettinen also makes a claim related to the style that Kolb uses in his book *Experiential Learning* (1984). According to Miettinen the style could be "characterized as consultancy literature." Whereas I do not find the book much different from the style used in American scientific literature, I do find that the work *Organizational behavior: An experiential approach* (Osland, Kolb & Rubin, 2001) is a clear example of what Miettinen (2000, p. 55) would characterize to be of consultancy literature style. However, in this case the book is explicitly claimed to be a workbook written with teaching purposes in mind. However, a curiosity that strikes me is that the learning styles are prominently presented in the beginning of *Organizational behavior: An experiential approach* (Osland, Kolb & Rubin, 2001, pp. 46-47) with reference to "1976 by David A. Kolb". The fact that strikes me is that the learning styles mentioned are AC - CE and AE - RO. In other words, the presented learning styles have not been updated to the current version with nine learning styles (Kolb & Kolb, 2005, p. 198) even if the book has been published after the updating of the learning styles from four to nine (Kolb & Kolb, 2005, pp. 196–197).

The experiential learning theory build on six propositions according to Kolb and Kolb (2005, p. 194):

1. Learning is to be understood as an engaging process and "not in terms of outcomes". Kolb and Kolb (2005) go on to emphasise the importance of engagement including feedback on the effectiveness of the learner's progress, without too much focus on outcomes. Kolb and Kolb even refer to Dewey's pedagogic creed citing Dewey "[E]ducation must be conceived as a continuing reconstruction of experience: . . . the process and goal of education are one and the same thing" (Kolb & Kolb, 2005, p. 194). Maybe a minor observation is that Dewey is continuing in the next sentence "in dealing with the child" (Dewey, 1897) as

if the chapter would be geared towards pedagogy related to children. Nevertheless, even overlooking this, my conclusion is that Dewey is pointing out that the process and goal are equally important. I do not perceive that Dewey would claim that the process is more important than the goal as Kolb is claiming. I recognize that Dewey is claiming that both are equally important.

2. All learning is relearning. Best learning processes includes making students' beliefs and ideas about a topic visible and integrating them with new, potentially more developed ideas.
3. Learning calls for resolving conflicts between opposed modes of experiencing and adapting to the world. Thus, the driving forces for learning are conflict, differences and disagreement. This requires reflection and action that moves back and forth between opposite modes that also involve feeling and thinking.
4. Learning is a holistic process involving adaptation to the world, i.e. learning involves thinking, feeling, perceiving, and behaving.
5. Synergetic transactions between the learner and the environment result in learning.
6. Knowledge is created through learning. Experiential learning build upon a constructivist theory of learning. This means that social knowledge is created and re-created in the learner through a transformation of experience, opposed to the "transmission" view where pre-existing and fixed ideas are transferred to the learner.

Kolb's (Kolb, 1984, p. 40-43; Kolb & Kolb, 2005, p. 194) original model for experiential learning theory builds upon two dialectically related modes of *comprehending* and transforming experience, namely Concrete Experience (CE) - Abstract Conceptualization (AC) and two dialectically related modes of *transforming* experience, namely Reflective Observation (RO) and Active Experimentation (AE). In experiential learning, tension is created among these four learning modes. In the idealized learning cycle, the learner "touches all the bases", i.e. experiencing, reflecting, thinking, and acting in responsive to the learning situation and what is being learned. The basis for observations and reflections are the immediate and concrete experiences.

The four learning styles that are based on the above are: diverging, assimilating, converging and accommodating. For an individual with *diverging* style the CE and RO are the dominant learning abilities. The learner has the ability to view concrete situations from many different points of view. This type of learner is strongest in situations where

generation of ideas, e.g. brainstorming sessions, is required. This kind of learner is supposed to have broad cultural interests, like to gather information and to be interested in people. People with the style prefer group work, listening with an open mind and receiving personalized feedback.

Assimilating style means that the learner has AC and RO as dominant learning abilities. In practise, this means that it is easy for them to understand a wide range of information and putting it into concise, logical, form. Focus is on ideas and abstract concepts. Preference is on reading, lectures, exploring analytical models and having time thinking through things. A person with *converging* style has AC and AE as dominant learning aptitudes. Finding practical uses for ideas and theories comes easy. Preference is to deal with technical tasks and problems and experimenting with new ideas, simulations and practical applications. *Accommodating* style implies that the learner has CE and AE as dominant learning abilities. The learner learn from "hands-on" experiences and enjoy carrying out plans involving themselves in new and challenging experiences. The tendency is often to act on "gut" feelings and to solve problems relying on other people for information.

Miettinen (2000) refers to David Kolb's book *Experiential Learning* (1984) when talks about Kolb's "four-stage model of learning" and rejects that model firmly. The model is called "The Lewinian Experimental Learning Model (Kolb, 1984, p. 21) in Kolb's book. I feel that Miettinen is somewhat confusing the "four-stage model of learning" with the concept of learning styles when he further attempts to explain his point of view (Miettinen, 2000, p. 61). Nevertheless, the paper *Learning Styles and Learning Spaces: Enhancing Experiential Learning in Higher Education* (Kolb & Kolb, 2005) does not mention the learning model anymore at all. A possible explanation is that either Kolb has himself rejected the model, or then the does not give it much weight anymore. However, Kolb has further developed the concept for learning styles in his paper published in 2005:

This research that increases the "resolution" of the learning style type grid from four to nine pixels may help to deal with a common misconception of ELT learning styles; that is, the tendency to treat the four learning styles as four categorical entities rather than continuous positions on the dimensions of AC-CE and AE-RO. Gould (2003) in his last book writes extensively about the bias in science that arises from such dichotomous thinking. Although the simple format of the LSI may limit empirical identification; theoretically, there are many identifiable learning styles along these two dimensions (not to mention other dimensions identified by other learning style theories

Thus, the original four learning styles have later been extended to comprise nine learning styles in total. The additional five learning styles are Northerner, Easterner, Southerner, Westerner and a "Balancing" learning style (Kolb & Kolb, 2005, pp. 196 – 197).

The Northerner accentuates feeling (CE) and balancing acting (AE) and reflecting (RO). The Easterner, on the other hand, emphasizes reflecting (RO) and balances feeling (CE) and thinking (AC). Southerner learning style give emphasis to thinking (AC) and then balancing acting (AE) and reflecting (RO), whereas the Westerner style focus on acting (AE) and balances feeling (CE) and thinking (AC). The "Balancing" learning style integrates AC - CE and AE - RO (Kolb & Kolb, 2005, pp. 197-198).

Kolb and Kolb present the nine learning types in a grid in figure 2 below (Kolb & Kolb, 2005, p. 198). The division into nine styles is an attempt from Kolb's side to overcome a common misconception. According Kolb and Kolb the issue has been that the four learning styles often has been understood to form four categorical entities instead of continuous positions on AC - CE and AE - RO dimensions.

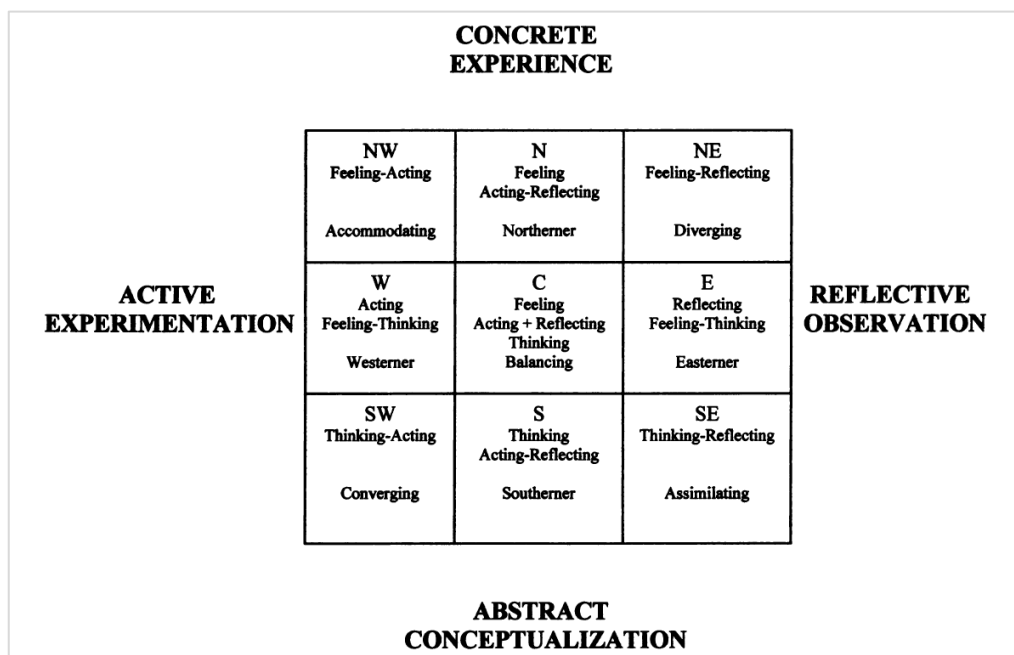


Figure 2. The Nine-Region Learning Style Type Grid

Kolb and Kolb (2005, p. 199) present the concept of learning space as an additional, and complementing, element to the learning styles. The different learning spaces are microsystem, mesosystem, exosystem and macrosystem. Microsystem is the immediate scenery like a course or a classroom. Mesosystem comprises for instance the learner's

dorm or family. Exosystem is formed by the formal and informal social structures influencing the learner's immediate environment like institutional policies and procedures. Macrosystem constitutes institutional patterns and values of the wider culture. Examples of this are cultural values that influence the persons in learner's micro- or mesosystem, e.g. esteeming abstract knowledge more than practical knowledge. Kolb and Kolb go on to describe the elements of a growth-producing experience:

A growth-producing experience in the philosophy of experiential learning refers not only to a direct experience related to a subject matter under study but also to the total experiential life space of the learner. This includes the learner's physical and social environment and quality of relationships. (Kolb & Kolb, 2005, p. 207)

Miettinen claims that Kolb's model of experiential learning is inadequate. He also claims that "Through its humanistic connection, the concept of experience also has an ideological function: faith in an individual's innate capacity to grow and learn. This is what makes it particularly attractive for adult education theorists and for the idea of lifelong learning." (Miettinen, 2000, p. 54). I have a somewhat hard time to understand what Miettinen is meaning here. Is not the question of "individual's innate capacity to grow and learn" a prerequisite for any pedagogical function especially when it comes to adult education?

Learning means facing and embracing differences. In practise, this can mean opposing views when it comes to deeply held ideas and beliefs in contrast to new ideas. It can be confronting life experiences and values of others that are different from us, and through that process understanding others. Often the differences can be challenging, thought-provoking and threatening. This requires that the learning space is encouraging for expression of differences and that the psychological safety supports the learner in facing challenges (Kolb & Kolb, 2005, p. 207).

Robert Kegan has well put the importance of support and the influence it has on learning:

If I were asked to stand on one leg... and summarize reading of centuries of wise reflection on what is required of an environment for it to facilitate the growth of its members, I would say this: people grow best where they continuously experience an ingenious blend of support and challenge; the rest is commentary. Environments that are weighted too heavily in the direction of challenge without adequate support are toxic; they promote defensiveness and constriction. Those weighted too heavily toward support without adequate challenge are ultimately boring; they promote devitalization. Both kinds of imbalance lead to withdrawal or dissociation from the context. In contrast, the balance of support and challenge leads to vital engagement. (Kegan, 1995, p. 42)

This is important, since people spontaneously make meaning from their experiences through conversation. At the same time, feelings and emotions are central determiners in whether and what we learn. Fear and anxiety, and other negative emotions, can block learning. On the other hand, positive feelings, like attraction and interest can be essential for learning (Kolb & Kolb, 2005, pp. 207- 208). However, action is also needed and can often be seen as the most important part of the learning cycle. The reason is that it completes the learning cycle as it brings the internal acts of reflection and thought into contact with external experiences that the action creates.

John Dewey resolved the relationship and tension between experience and reflection by taking, practical, material life activity as the basic point of departure. Dewey considered, according to Miettinen (2000, p.p. 61-62) the habitual based non-reflective experience as the dominant form of experience. It is out of the contradiction and inadequacy of the habitual experience and ways of action that the reflective experience grows and it is mediated by intelligence and knowledge growth. Reflection is initiated by the need to solve problems related to the habitual ways of action. Only reflection generated hypotheses can be tested in experimental activity. According to Miettinen every phase in Dewey's model is interconnected. The problems and dynamics of activities connected with life are the cohesion in habitual and reflective experience.

Dewey (1953, p. 26) argues that experiences modify the individuals who undergo them whether the person like this modification or not:

The principle of habit so understood obviously goes deeper than the ordinary conception of a habit as a more or less fixed way of doing things, although it includes the latter as one of its special cases. It covers the formation of attitudes, attitudes that are emotional and intellectual; it covers our basic sensitivities and ways of meeting and responding to all the conditions which we meet in living. From this point of view, the principle of continuity of experience means that every experience both takes up something from those which have gone before and modifies in some way the quality of those which come after. (Dewey, 1953, p. 27)

Dewey's approach is evolutionary and based on Darwinism, (Dewey, 1949, p. 75-76, Dewey, 1967, pp. 337-338). According to Miettinen (2000, p. 65) this is seen in Dewey's views on human being's adaption to his environment. Adaption means habits and routines that individuals form in their ways of doing things. Reflective action sets in when these habits do not work due to a problem, uncertainty or a crisis. As a result, a hypothesis is formulated and then tested in reality. The central point in Dewey's thinking related to the concept of experiment is whether the authority connection and the habitual ways of thinking and acting can be replaced by a "reconstructive" and reflective way of acting.

Miettinen gives an account on his view of Dewey's model for reflective thought and action and the phases that are included in the figure below (Figure 3, Miettinen, 2000, p. 65).

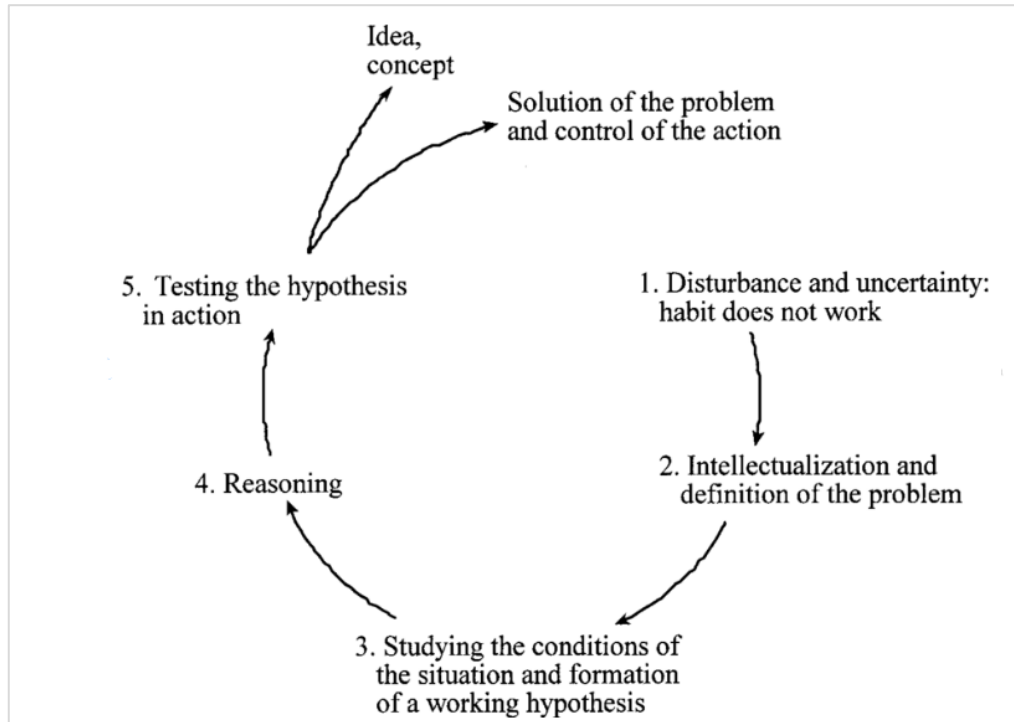


Figure 3. Dewey's model of reflective thought and action

The phases of reflective learning (Miettinen, 2000, p. 66-67) are the following:

1. *The indeterminate situation: the habit does not work.* This is when habitual ways of thinking and doing are in some way disturbed and they do not fulfil the purpose anymore and reflective thought is required. In this phase conditions, resources, aids, difficulties and obstacles of action are studied.
2. *Intellectualization: defining the problem.* The reflective thought process then starts with defining what is wrong. According to Dewey, the problem definition is a crucial step.
3. *Studying the conditions of the situation and formation of a working hypothesis.* In this step the conditions are analysed and diagnosed. The conditions are both of material and social nature. It also includes an assessment of the required means and resources that are to be used to resolve the issue. The working hypothesis is tentative.

4. *Reasoning - in a narrower sense.* In this phase, different solutions are evaluated. This can be done through thought experiments where various hypotheses can be tested at thought level to produce a tentative working hypothesis, or guiding idea or a plan. It is possible to return to the beginning in case a solution is not adequate. This is in fact an important feature of the thought experiments. In addition, the working hypothesis can be reformulated as a result of the thought experiments.
5. *Testing the hypothesis by action.* In this phase, the working hypothesis is tested in practise. According to Dewey, the validity is tested through material activity. This phase also include proper reasoning as a part of the process of practically testing the hypothesis.

The testing of the hypothesis can either be successful or not. Learning takes place even in the case it is not successful, i.e. the hypothesis is not confirmed and this is something Dewey mentions as well. As Miettinen (2000, p. 67) points out: "But the hypothesis makes learning possible, because the outcome can be compared to the initial suppositions implied in the hypothesis."

As far as I can see Miettinen's (2000, p. 65) account on *Dewey's model of reflective thought and action* lacks the element of *experience*. Dewey comments on the usefulness and very nature of experience and the importance of it in *Reconstruction in Philosophy*:

It is unnecessary to repeat what has been so often dwelt upon as to the effect of experimental science in enabling man to effect a deliberate control of his environment. But since the impact of this control upon the traditional notion of experience is often overlooked, we must point out that when experience ceased to be empirical and became experimental, something of radical importance occurred. Aforetime man employed the results of his prior experience only to form customs that henceforth had to be blindly followed or blindly broken. Now, old experience is used to suggest aims and methods for developing a new and improved experience. Consequently experience becomes in so far constructively self-regulative. ... We do not merely have to repeat the past, or wait for accidents to force change upon us. We use our past experiences to construct new and better ones in the future. The very fact of experience thus includes the process by which it directs itself in its own betterment. (Dewey, 1949, pp. 94-95)

Miettinen (2000, p. 67-68) also highlights the fact that according to Dewey an outside problem, hypothesis and its testing in practice are the basis of reflective thought, or learning. Without these three components, there is no reflective learning. This is something that Miettinen claims Kolb has completely ignored. In fact, it seems that Kolb ignores the experience as a crucial ingredient in experiential learning. He mentions that "...learning, change, and growth are seen to be facilitated by an integrated process that begins with

here-and-now experience followed by collection of data and observations about that experience.” (Kolb, 1984, p- 21). Here, the experience is created in the learning situation “here and now”, but any previous experiences affecting the learning process are ignored. However, Kolb (1984, pp. 28-29) states also that all learning is relearning, thus admitting that previous experiences do have a role in the learning process. It is though not completely clear what Kolb means in this context with experience as he also alludes to the concept of beliefs held by people and the potential resistance to new ideas. Kolb (1984, p. 35) also refers to Dewey when it comes to experience and notes that experience can be of interior and exterior nature, but he is not very specific on his own view on this matter. In addition, experience is not taking a prominent role in Kolb’s work *Experiential Learning* (1984) as far as I can recognise.

2.2.3 Transformative learning

Transformative learning, when it occurs, means that the frame of reference of the adult learner is efficiently changed. The frame of reference is the coherent set of associations, concepts, values, feelings, conditioned responses that define the life world of the adult person. Important change in this frame of reference constitute transformational learning (Mezirow, 1997, p. 5). This shift of perception can alter the understanding of us and others, and the sense of our possibilities. Cox et al. (2014, p. 8) use the term *meaning perspectives* for the frame of reference. These meaning perspectives are difficult to change. However, they need to be challenged in order for deep learning to occur. Occasionally a life event can pose such a challenge. Challenging is inherent in coaching and is often crucial for promoting the required learning. Mezirow (1991, xii) criticizes earlier psychological theories for their lack of identifying meaning as a key component in adult learning. According to him attention has not been paid on how meaning is constructed, validated and reformulated by the adult learner.

Mezirow (1997, pp. 13-15) discusses the importance of reflection and alludes to judgement and assumptions. According to Mezirow reflection is not the same as introspection. The difference is that according to him any reflection involves a dimension of critique.

Transformative learning is two-dimensional. It involves transformation of meaning schemes and the transformation of meaning perspectives. Reflection is an integral part of the transformation of meaning schemes. When we realize that old assumptions do not work in problem solving situations, we create new ones or at least transform our old assumptions. This changes our interpretations of the experience. Everyday reflective learning happens in this way. Sometimes, but rarely, we realize that the basic premises

we have taken for granted are unjustified and in these occasions perspective transformation may result (Mezirow, 1991, p. 192).

Mezirow (1991, p. 161) argues that transformative learning require awareness of the context of one's beliefs and feelings. In addition, critical evaluation of one's assumptions and openness to change of perspectives are required. These are necessary to be able to let go of old perceptions and to be able to make a synthesis of old and new perspectives. Mezirow argues that a "perspective transformation" involves:

- a) an empowered sense of self,
- b) more critical understanding of how one's social relationships and culture have shaped one's beliefs and feelings, and
- c) more functional strategies and resources for taking action. Taking an action is an integral dimension of transformative learning" (Mezirow, 1991, p. 161).

Mezirow has been influenced among others by the works of Paulo Freire (Souto-Manning, 2010, p.85). Freire (1996, p. 71) pointed out that dialogue does not exist without humility. Dialogue is also the prerequisite for learning and acting. Arrogance has no part in learning.

Reflective learning is crucial in transformative learning and involves readiness to assess and reassess one's own assumptions. According to Mezirow (1991, p. 6) reflective learning becomes transformative when assumptions are discovered to be distorted, inauthentic and thus, invalid. This learning can result in new or transformed meaning schemes. Metaphors are strong tools in reasoning and they are instrumental in learning (Mezirow, 1997, pp. 80-81). Assumptions, beliefs and taken-for-grantedness can be blockers for learning and for absorbing new knowledge. This phenomenon can be associated with non-learning, which on the other hand is a fundamental capacity human beings need to have in order to function in society. Human beings do not have sufficient time or capacity to stop and reflect deeply every single time they are faced with a disjunctural experience (Jarvis, 2010, p. 106).

A shift in meaning perspectives generates a disorienting dilemma and results in questioning of long-held beliefs and values. According to Cox et al. (2014, p. 8) this is a decisive stage in a transformative coaching situation, since critical reflection on the nature and origin of the dilemma is taking place in this stage. This critical reflection requires

suspension of judgement related to the truth or falsity of ideas, until a better determination can be made. After this self-examination comes the final stage, which includes some sort of reorientation that in turn results in deep learning and revised action.

Mezirow (1997, pp. 93-96) puts forward four ways of learning. The first is learning through elaborating existing meaning schemes. This means that we adopt stereotypic responses to received information and build upon the pre-existing categories of meaning we have. The second form involves learning new meaning schemes. In other words, we create new meanings. These meaning schemes are adequately consistent and compatible with our other existing schemes and in a way complement or extend them. The third form happens through transformation of meaning schemes. Reflection on assumptions is crucial in this type of learning. A certain point of view or belief is not satisfactory anymore and we realize the inadequacy in our old ways of seeing and understanding meaning. The fourth form is related to perspective transformation. Through critical reflection, we become aware of specific presuppositions that are distorted or incomplete meaning perspectives. This happens through a reorganization of meaning. The new schemes are understood through a redefinition of the problem and happens while critically reassessing assumptions supporting one or several current meaning schemes. Often this type of transformation is associated with a life crisis that drives us to redefine old ways of understanding.

Adding new knowledge to our meaning schemes is not transformative learning. Learning needs to include reflective change in learner's beliefs, attitudes, opinions and emotional reactions that create meaning schemes or include transformation in our meaning perspectives. Mezirow sees that the educator has a specific role:

"The educator helps the learner focus upon and examine the assumptions — epistemological, social, and psychological—that underlie beliefs, feelings, and actions; assess the consequences of these assumptions; identify and explore alternative sets of assumptions; and test the validity of assumptions through effective participation in reflective dialogue... We professional adult educators have a commitment to help learners become more imaginative, intuitive, and critically reflective of assumptions; to become more rational through effective participation in critical discourse; and to acquire meaning perspectives that are more inclusive, integrative, discriminating, and open to alternative points of view." (Mezirow, 1997, pp. 223-224).

2.3 Terminology

In order to ensure a common understanding, the central terminology will be discussed next.

Business coaching: a form of coaching where a trained and ICF credentialed coach engages with his or her client in a thought-provoking and creative process. The client defines the goal of the coaching. The coach does not give advice, but facilitates the client's learning, development and performance processes. The coach's task is to ask questions that expand the client's world of thought, questions prevailing assumptions and old habits. The idea is that clients find their own solutions to their problems, and change their attitudes and assumptions. The purpose of business coaching is to bridge the gap between the client's potential and current position (Gerlofson & Lindberg, 2017, p. 125; Rogers, 2016, p. 133).

Coach: an external coach practitioner that is an International Coach Federation (ICF) credentialed coach. In other words, internal organizational coach practitioners are excluded from this study. The reason for this constraint is to ensure that the coaching provided by different coaches is as comparable as possible.

Coachee / Client: person who works in an organization and who receives coaching by an ICF credentialed coach.

Organization: the organization where the individuals who receives coaching work. The individual receives compensation for the work in the form of salary from the organization. Often the organization also pays for the coaching. The organization can be for-profit or non-profit.

3 Aims and research questions

The aim of this study is to examine coaching from an adult learning perspective and to form an understanding, based on interviews of seven ICF coach practitioners, what kind of adult learning processes are involved in coaching.

The purpose is also to form an understanding of potential elements that contribute to learning and what elements can slow down, or even hinder learning. Related to this is the exploration of methods and tools used by coaches to facilitate the learning experience. To close the interviews eleven ICF defined core coaching competencies are studied to understand which competencies are the most crucial from an adult learning perspective.

The viewpoint that is taken in this study is that of the coach. The material is gathered through interviewing seven coaches that have successfully completed an ICF-accredited coach training and or have Associate (ACC), Professional (PCC) and Master Certified Coach (MCC) ICF credentials.

The main themes of this study are:

- Adult learning processes and phenomena in coaching
- Tools and methods used by coaches to facilitate learning
- Elements that contribute to learning and elements that inhibit learning
- Most relevant ICF Core competencies that contribute to learning

The research questions that stem from the above:

- Which adult learning processes and phenomenon are at play in coaching
- What are the enablers contributing to positive outcome in coaching and what are the inhibitors?

After analysing the interview results, linkage to the theoretical framework will be made in chapter seven *Analysis and discussion*. The data analysis method will be discussed as part of the next in chapter in 4.3 Data analysis method.

4 Research strategy, data and methods

4.1 Research strategy

The study will be conducted as a qualitative research based on interviews with ICF certified coaches.

4.2 Data collection method

4.2.1 Sample size and requirements

The sample size was seven interviewees. The interviewee had to meet the following requirements:

- The interviewee was an ICF Certified Coach (has completed at least Certified Business Coach® training)
- The interviewee is or had been an active coach (had coached at least one person in the last six months)

4.2.2 Contacting and gathering the participants

The sample was obtained by using my existing contacts to ICF certified coaches. The interviewees were contacted by email. Totally nine potential interview subjects were contacted. Of these nine persons, seven eventually participated in the interviews.

Coaching is regulated by ICF's ethical principles that all ICF coaches needs to adhere to. There are for instance strict regulations regarding confidentiality and privacy (ICF Global Board of Directors, 2015). Because of this, there are no collective records of people participating in ICF coaching. The coaches cannot divulge information to a third party regarding their clients.

4.2.3 Practicalities

The interviews were conducted as individual interviews, meaning a one-on-one interview with each interviewee. The interviews were conducted in Finnish. The seven interviews were conducted between June and August 2019. All interview except one were conducted in Helsinki University Main Library's (Kaisa House) group study rooms. One interview was conducted in the office of the interviewee.

All interviews were recorded with a recording application and in addition, as a back-up, the key points were written down if, for some reason, the recorded data could not be

used. In addition, this practice ensured that the researcher himself could better internalize the obtained data. All recorded data was usable. The duration of the interviews was planned to take about 45 minutes. The interviews took on an average 53 minutes. The shortest interview took 37 minutes and the longest interview took 120 minutes.

The interviews consisted of 15 questions, which were divided into four main themes, in this order:

- Theme 1: Elements that contribute to learning and elements that inhibit learning (four questions),
- Theme 2: Tools and methods used by coaches to facilitate learning (two questions),
- Theme 3: Adult learning processes and phenomena in coaching (one question)
- Theme 4: Most relevant ICF core competencies that contribute to learning (one question).

In addition, the interviews included five background questions that were asked in the beginning of the interview and an introductory question that preceded the main theme questions mentioned above. The introductory question was what the coach thought that coaching is. The interview was terminated with a closing question. The full list of interview questions in English and Finnish are available in Appendix 2.

4.3 Data analysis method

Content analysis has the potential to uncover many "hidden" points of view that are conveyed through written texts. The reasoning behind has to do with the idea of the text being completely independent of what the author intentionally meant when writing the text. The text conceals some clues to a deeper-rooted and possibly unintentional message that is actually conveyed (Denscombe, 2014, p. 282).

Content analysis is one of the most common research methods in social sciences and media studies (Denzin & Lincoln, 2018, p. 620). Content analysis can be used to analyse, for example interviews, articles, diaries and books (Tuomi & Sarajärvi, 2018, p. 117). The aim is to obtain a concise and general description of the phenomenon being studied through analysis. Content analysis differs from discourse analysis in that it looks for the meanings of text, whereas discourse analysis explores how meanings are produced.

4.3.1 Different views on content analysis

Krippendorff (2004, pp. 340-357) divides practical content analysis into three groups: content-driven analysis, problem-based analysis, and method-based analysis. Content-driven content analysis requires that the text is sufficiently accessible in so that the text can stimulate researcher's interest. This method can also be called "fishing expeditions" when the research questions arise from the material being studied. Problem-based content analysis is motivated by epistemological questions about currently inaccessible phenomena, events, or processes. Here, the researchers believe the text may be able to answer these questions. Researchers begin with research questions and try to find answers by selecting analytical paths from the appropriate texts of their choice. In the method-based content analysis, the researcher applies known analytical methods to subjects previously studied by other means.

Tuomi and Sarajärvi (2018, p. 107) mention inductive and deductive analysis in their description of content analysis as a method for analyzing material in text format. However, they see this division as problematic, not least because it can be questioned through "pure" induction. This, in the authors' opinion, leads to the fact that new theories cannot be created on the basis of observations alone. The purpose of deductive reasoning, on the other hand, is to preserve the truth in the reasoning process. The biggest problem is that this type of division easily overlooks abductive reasoning. Abductive reasoning allows the formation of a theory if observations are accompanied by a leading idea. Due to this, Tuomi and Sarajärvi (2018, p. 109) see that it is better to divide the different options of content analysis into content-driven, theory-guided, and theory-based analysis.

Content-driven content analysis is based on inductive analysis of data. This analysis can be divided into three steps. In the first step, the data is reduced, after which the remaining data is grouped into clusters. In the third and final stage, theoretical concepts are created from the material, i.e. the material is abstracted (Tuomi & Sarajärvi, 2018, p. 122).

Tuomi and Sarajärvi (2018, p. 133) use the term theory-guided content analysis for analysis that parts from empirical data. It is similar to content-driven content analysis. The difference lies in the way in which the content is connected to theoretical concepts in the abstraction. According to Tuomi and Sarajärvi (2018, p. 133), the American tradition does not speak of theory-guided analysis. Tuomi and Sarajärvi, however, emphasize that the analysis proceeds in the same way as in the case of content-driven analysis, i.e. the material, or content, determine the analysis.

The starting point for theory-based content analysis is theory. The approach is deductive. For example, the classification of material is based on a concept system that already exists. The first step in the analysis is in that case building the analytical framework. The concept system can be, for example, a theory, a model or a concept system according to Tuomi and Sarajärvi (2018, p. 127).

According to Denzin and Lincoln (2018, pp. 620-621), the purpose of content analysis is to be an objective, systematic and observational method that can be used in qualitative and quantitative research. In interpretive phenomenological research, content analysis is used as a data reduction technique that generally produces codes and categories. According to Denzin and Lincoln (2018, pp. 620-621), qualitative content analysis consists of a set of techniques aimed at systematic textual analysis. Often, high-quality data processing programs are used in this context.

According to Drisko and Maschi (2015, p. 2), some researchers sum up the frequency of words and consider this to be a basic technique for content analysis. Other researchers use content analysis without a statistical approach. In these cases, the technology is called Interpretive Content Analysis and Qualitative Content Analysis. In these approaches, researchers focus on narrative portrayal of the meaning of communication in specific contexts rather than quantitative word counting. These three different approaches have several similarities and some striking differences. They vary according to how researchers define content and use methods to collect, encode and analyse data.

From the various perspectives presented above related to content analysis, problem-based content analysis by Krippendorff (2004) and the theory-guided starting point by Tuomi and Sarajärvi (2018) seemed the most fruitful options to be adopted in this work.

4.3.2 Practical implementation of content analysis

Since I use content analysis in my thesis, the practical implementation of the method is essential. Therefore, I will now look at how content analysis can be implemented in practice.

The starting point for theory-guided content analysis is the content. The difference with the content-driven approach is that the empirical data is combined with theoretical concepts in the abstraction process. That is, while in the content-driven approach the theoretical concepts are created from the material, in the theory-driven approach, the theoretical concepts are introduced as if they were “already known” related to the phenomena that is studied (Tuomi & Sarajärvi, 2018, p. 133).

The theory-guiding approach starts with the original expression, or utterance. It is crystallized, or reduced, to find the essential part of the expression. Sub-classes are then created from these expressions and appropriate super-classes are clustered from the sub-classes. The super-classes can then be combined to form super-classes entities (Tuomi & Sarajärvi, 2018, p. 132). The figure below (Figure 4, Tuomi & Sarajärvi, 2018, s. 132) shows a practical example of how analysis proceeds in a theory-guided approach.

Alkuperäinen ilmaus/lausuma	Pelkistetty ilmaus	Alaluokka	Yläluokka	Yhdistävä
<p>*Kyllähän sitä on opiskellut ja lukenut sairauksista ja näin tulee seurattua ja mitä elintoiminnoissa tapahtuu sitten tulee mietittyä, että miksi teen näin ja mitä siitä seuraa ja mitä elintoiminnoissa tapahtuu joissain sairauksissa.</p> <p>*Aina pitää olla taustalla joku tieto, tutkimustieto kun tekee päätöksiä.</p> <p>*Tuossa käytännön työssä saa varmuutta silleen, kun on lukenut jonkun artikkelin, miten asia on eli miten hyvä toimia ja näin saa semmoista varmuutta toimintaan.</p>	<p>Tieteellisen tiedon arviointi ja seuranta Tieteellisen tiedon käyttöönotto omassa toiminnassa Toiminnan perustelut tieteellisellä tiedolla</p> <p>Tutkimustiedon hyödyntäminen päätöksenteossa</p> <p>Uusi tutkimustieto tukee päätöksentekoa ja tuo varmuutta toimintaan</p>	<p>Empiirinen tieto</p>	<p>Tieteelliseen tietoon perustuva näyttö päätöksenteossa</p>	
<p>*Erilaisissa hoitotoimenpiteissä on kehittynyt tieto et miten jokin toiminta vaikuttaa asiakkaan hoitoon ja se on kyllä aika pitkälti tullut kokemuksen kautta se päätöksenteon varmuus siitä mitä pitää tehdä</p> <p>*Työura ja tiedot on kehittynyt siitä kun on lähtenyt hoitotyöhön ja nyt uskallusta tehdä niitä päätöksiä ja ratkaisuja asiakkaan tilassa ja voimissa.</p> <p>*Kokemuksen tuoma varmuus on tuonut myöskin sitä ammatillista osaamista päätöksentekoon.</p> <p>*Kaikki tulee niin kuin itsestään, oma niin kun sellaisen henkilökohtaisen päätöksentekokyvyn siten, että jotkut asiat osaa tehdä hyvinkin nopeasti ja selkeästi.</p> <p>*Se on tietysti niin, että päätökset pitää olla asiakkaallakin sen mukaan mikä on hänen oma vointi ja henkilökohtainen päätöksentekokyky.</p> <p>*Kysyn asiakkaan mielipidettä asioihin ja kunnioltan hänen itsemääräämisoikeutta ja hänen tahtoaan hoitotoimissa.</p>	<p>Kokemus lisää varmuutta päätöksentekoon</p> <p>Kokemus ja tietojen kehittyminen tuo uskallusta päätöksentekoon</p> <p>Kokemus on tuonut ammatillista osaamista päätöksentekoon</p> <p>Henkilökohtainen kyky tehdä päätöksiä</p> <p>Kyky tehdä nopeita ja selkeitä päätöksiä</p> <p>Päätöksentekoon vaikuttavat asiakkaan vointi ja henkilökohtainen kyky ja tarve</p> <p>Asiakkaan tahdon kunnioittaminen päätöksenteossa</p>	<p>Kokemuksellinen tieto</p> <p>Hiilijainen tieto</p> <p>Asiakkaan tarpeista ja toiveita koskeva tieto</p>	<p>Asiantuntijan kokemuksen perustuva näyttö päätöksenteossa</p> <p>Asiakkaan kokemuksen perustuva näyttö päätöksenteossa</p>	<p>Näyttöön perustuva toiminta hoitotyön päätöksenteossa</p>

Figure 4. Example analysis in a theory-guided approach

Problem-based content analysis starts from the epistemic question. The goal is to create an understanding of the issue, or phenomenon that is inaccessible. The starting point is the belief that the phenomenon can be understood through systematic analysis. Krippendorff (2004, pp. 342-343) points out that this approach is quite commonplace for example when a psychoanalyst is trying to understand patients' pathologies, or when a lawyer tries to find evidence against an accusation. These examples have to do with epistemic questions, that is, the problem of not knowing something that you consider important. In the research world, these problems need to be translated into research questions. According to Krippendorff (2004, p. 343), the analysis consists of seven further steps once the previously mentioned step has been taken. These steps include ascertaining stable correlations, locating relevant texts, defining units of analysis, sampling the texts, developing categories, recording instructions, selecting an analytical procedure, adopting standards and lastly allocating resources.

For my thesis, I feel that the theory-guided content analysis presented by Tuomi and Sarajärvi (2018) is best suited as a method for analysing interview material. That is, the phenomena emerging from the data are the ones that guide the research results. The way in which Tuomi and Sarajärvi present the different stages of the investigation is also understandable and, in my view, feasible. Here I felt that the various stages of analysis put forward by Krippendorff were a bit complicated, not to say a little vague.

4.3.3 Possible issues with the research design

According to Denzin and Lincoln (2018, pp. 620-621), the greatest limitation of content analysis stems from the nature of the analytical approach. By this they mean that content analysis may exclude implicit or hidden meanings from the coding. However, they refer to research related to media when they make this observation. When using the method, there is a tendency to focus on manifested content, breaking down visual messages into either presence, absence or frequency. Although reliability is taken into account in this way, it raises questions of validity if the method is used only as a mechanical process. For this reason, Denzin and Lincoln (2018, pp. 620-621) believe that quantitative content analysis may not be the only research method, but may prove to be very effective if used as part of a triangulation. The comments of Denzin and Lincoln (2018) refer to media research and visual material and may not be directly applicable to, for example, data collected through interviews.

The central challenge of theory-guided content analysis is that the researcher must be able to extract expressions and topics from the original material without falling into the trap of allowing a given theory to influence the choices the researcher makes. The data must be approached in the terms of the data and only when the data has been analysed can the researcher “force” the themes found into some suitable theory (Tuomi & Sarajärvi, 2018, p. 133). I interpret this as meaning that the result may well be that, as a result of the analysis of the data, the conclusion can be that none of the prevailing theories are applicable to the findings. Alternatively, the researcher can conclude that, based on the analysis, parts of the different theories are suitable for findings in the research data. I see that the difference with the so-called “pure” content-driven approach is that in that approach the researcher is, in a way, denying the existence of theories. In such a content-driven approach, I see the risk that the researcher will “reinvent the wheel”. That is, the researcher invents the “new” theory from the data without finding out if any theory could even partially explain the phenomenon being studied. Indeed, Tuomi and Sarajärvi (2018, p. 109) highlight this risk and emphasize that it is problematic, among other things,

because "the theoretical content of thought observations is a generally accepted principle.

Coding content of qualitative research can pose serious challenges. Drisko and Maschin (2015, p. 17) came to this conclusion after examining studies that had been done using content analysis methods. According to them, it was not always obvious what qualitative research information was. This ambiguity was due, *inter alia*, to the fact that qualitative research often uses inductive processes to generate codes and it remains unclear how or on what basis the code was created.

Denscombe (2014, p. 283) highlights the fact that in content analysis, the researcher sometimes relocates the studied units from their context, and then the researcher may "find" material that the author did not mean when writing the text. This is a risk, especially when the text content is suggestive or allusive. Content analysis is in many ways a fairly raw tool if the text to be analysed is subtle and complex. For this reason, Descombe believes that content analysis is best suited for analysing material and communication that is straightforward, obvious, and relatively simple. Descombe adds that the more the text is based on the writer's fine and complex meanings or the reader's conclusions, the less valuable content analysis becomes in revealing the meaning of the text. The same is probably true for analysing verbal communication that is very allusive.

Potential challenges that I need to take into account include, for example, not letting some theory, or certain theories, influence the analysis when creating sub-classes, or clustering sub-classes into appropriate super-classes. I must also pay attention to describe in enough detail a particular super-class, or category, when I account for the results. This is important so that the reader is able to understand what choices I made and how I have generated the end result that are presented in this thesis.

4.3.4 Practical steps in content analysis

Every interview recording was firstly transcribed to verbatim. After this, the material was imported to the qualitative data analysis and research software Atlas.ti. The findings from the interviews were arranged according to the main themes and the interview questions related to these themes. Each question was coded separately as a separate group. In the first coding round there were ten questions (questions number 6 to 15) that were coded individually. These groups were:

- Introduction
 - 6. *What is a coaching according to you?*
- THEME 1: Elements that contribute to learning and elements that inhibit learning
 - 7. *What is your idea of successful coaching?*
 - 8. *What is your idea of unsuccessful coaching?*
 - 9. *Which factors restrict, according to your experience, a successful coaching?*
 - 10. *Which factors, according to your experience, contribute to a successful coaching?*
- THEME 2: Tools and methods used by coaches to facilitate learning
 - 11. *What tools do you possibly use?*
 - 12. *What methods do you possibly use in coaching?*
- THEME 3: Adult learning processes and phenomenon in coaching
 - 13. *What kind of learning or learning processes do you think is associated with coaching?*
- THEME 4: Most relevant ICF core competencies that contribute to learning
 - 14. *(A list of ICF Core Competencies is showed to the participant, Appendix 1) Here are the eighteen ICF Core Competencies. Which of these core skills do you think will contribute to learning in coaching?*
- Closure
 - 15. *Does anything come your mind that you would like to add, in other words, did I for instance forget to ask something important?*

Question 13 related to adult learning was divided into two questions since answers contained views on adult learning happening in the coachee, but also in the coach.

There were 773 findings that were marked as bearing a meaning after the initial analysis of the verbatims. All analysis until this point was done in Atlas.ti. After this the results were exported to Excel for further analysis. Duplicate mentioning was removed which resulted in 319 findings. The closure question number 15 was left out as no significant information related to the research questions were brought up in this question.

I then continued the analysis by coding the 319 findings. I did not have any pre-made codes. I did the coding inductively, by combining the meanings expressed by different

interviews that were similar to each other. This coding resulted in 187 codes or sub-classes.

I then continued the coding exploring if the 187 sub-class codes would be possible to further group into super-classes. This process reduced the codes to 53 classes, or super-classes. This last stage consisted also of combining the codes based on meaning and disregarding, to some extent, order in which the question that was presented for instance. An example of this is combining findings and codes between questions 8. *What is your idea of an unsuccessful coaching?* and 9. *Which factors restrict, according to your experience, a successful coaching?*

4.4 Ethics

This thesis adheres to the ethical principles for research with human participants that has been drawn up by the Finnish National Board on Research Integrity (TENK). The research did not involve characteristics mentioned in TENK's guidelines for research that require request of statement from human sciences ethics committee before commencing research (TENK, 2009, p. 3). Therefore, the statement was not requested for this study.

An element to consider is that a coaching discussion is always confidential. This may, to some extent, affect the results of the research. However, the questions related to coaching in this research are of general nature and does not require a coach to reveal any specific situation related to a client's coaching. The confidentiality is also stressed in ICF Global Board of Directors (2015) Code of Ethics¹ document. Section 4.24) states that the coach needs to "Maintain the strictest levels of confidentiality with all client and sponsor information unless release is required by law."

Before the interviews each interviewee was explained what the research was about. Each participant also received information about the rights of the research participants, e.g. that the participant may withdraw from the study at any time and that they also had the right to refuse to answer a specific question if they so desired. Each participant was asked to fill in a consent form (Appendix 4) related to the collection of research materials and to the use of research material. Once all the data has been analysed and the results reported, the interview material will be destroyed.

¹ A renewed version of ICF Code of Ethics went into effect on January 1, 2020 (ICF, ndf). Gathering of all the research data took place when the previous version was in force and therefore the new ICF Code of Ethics did not affect this study.

I am a certified business coach and whilst this potentially increases my ability to understand the underlying phenomenon, it could potentially also affect the study and the results due to positive or negative bias. I will pay special attention to the fact that I am aware of the issue and that I try to maintain objectivity throughout the whole research process.

5 Results

I will describe the results of the study following the same structure that I used in the interviews. Thus, I will start with reporting the findings related to the introductory question “What is coaching according to you?”. With the question I tried to outline how the individual interviewee sees coaching and prepare the interviewee for the interview and set the scene. It also served as the base for understanding and relating interviewees’ answers to the subsequent questions

5.1 What is coaching?

The answers to this question can be grouped to three categories, or super-classes. Coaching was perceived to be a *supportive action*, a *philosophy* and a *method* that is based on a *dyadic relationship built on trust*.

The supportive action meant that a coach supports clients’ thinking and reflection processes. In addition, the coach supports client’s development. Five of the seven coaches that were interviewed mentioned that the coach supports client’s thinking and reflection.

Supporting the customer’s thinking in a way that also serves the needs of the organization ... coaching is first and foremost about supporting thinking. Then follows the activity ... I work at the thinking level. The actions are then the customer’s responsibility. (coach 2)

Thinking partnerships and in my opinion it describes quite well that it does challenge a person’s own thinking to explore new perspectives and maybe also habits....looking at things from a different angle. (coach 4)

The coach helps the coachee to find his or her strengths, resources and solutions to the challenges he or she is currently considering. (coach 6)

Pondering together and in partnership, which helps the coachee to learn something more about his or her own thinking. (coach 7)

Comments related to coach supporting clients’ development and supporting clients to make good choices was given by two coaches in both cases.

That coaching is a *philosophy and method* was highlighted in many aspects. Maximizing the client’s potential and philosophy of life and idea of man was clearly geared towards the philosophical underpinning of coaching. The more practical side of coaching was highlighted in the answers where coaching was seen as a method, skill, tool and way of working. Coaching was also seen as a place to pause and reflect and a process, as well as, a method to accelerate a client’s learning process.

A way to awaken and maximize the dormant potential of the other person. Coaching is by definition maximizing the potential ... so at the core of all is maximizing potential. (coach 3)

The coach helps the coachee to find his or her strengths, resources and solutions to the challenges he / she is currently pondering. (coach 6)

It is a method, ... a kind of a way of working or a development instrument or tool... some kind of a way of looking at life or an outlook on life and human beings... (coach1)

Three of the interviewees mentioned that coaching is a *dyadic relationship based on trust*. The relationship aspect was highlighted as being crucial in order to achieve positive results.

...dyadic coaching is an interactive relationship based on trust. (coach 6)

5.2 Theme 1: Contributing and inhibiting elements

5.2.1 Characteristics of successful coaching

The characteristics of a successful coaching were seen by the interviewees to be a combination of the *coachee achieving a higher level of learning and insight*, the coaching being *action and goal-oriented* and coach being *client centered*.

The most prominent attributes mentioned by five coaches related to the *coachee achieving a higher level of learning and insight*, was *durable and concrete change in client's way of thinking and acting*.

Some lasting change in coachee's way of thinking related to those [set] goals has taken place, a change has happened at the level of understanding. Goal directional development can be achieved by many methods. However, it is characteristic for coaching, if it is good, that the change is permanent. It happens at that level of understanding and insight. It does not simply happen because "I do it now since we talked about it". (coach 2)

As a coach, that moment of eating chocolate cake [absolutely best moments for a coach] is when you see, at that moment, that the person realizes something that goes really deep into his or her cognitive structures or structures of thinking. The coachee somehow kind of leaves from that moment, kind of like the same person but somehow also as a different and changed person... that change... (coach 5)

That the coachee really becomes aware of something new about him- or herself and puts it into practice to produce something concrete that can even be measured, or at least somehow verified. (coach 6)

Some big insight happening that will make bigger changes happen, even bigger than one could have imagined... like learning from one's way of doing things and learning about one's way of thinking. That is coaching at its best. That the coachee has much more self-knowledge and is so much more aware of what is essential and important and what are the driving forces in their lives. (coach 7)

Four coaches mentioned surprising, as in unexpected, insights in their interview as an aspect of good coaching:

The surprising observations and insights and moments of growth that occur during that process... coachees reach the agreed goals, but then there are those weird surprises and... then of course there is also like the level of meta-learning.... the meta-learning that happens during that whole process. and I even feel

that even though the sponsor maybe not consciously pay for it, I no less feel that it is probably the most important thing in the long run in those coaching sessions. (coach 3)

The most wonderfully successful coaching experience is seeing the lamp light up in coachee's head when coachee realizes something essential and moves on and those are often the moments when it is quiet afterwards; and it is somehow just lovely to float in that silence. (coach 5)

Four coaches mentioned coaching being *action and goal-oriented*. They saw that a client reaching targets that have been established in the beginning of the coaching and that clients advancing toward the agreed targets were part of successful coaching.

The *client centered* view to successful coaching means that the client is the one to define if a coaching is successful. It is not the coach to define this, or even attempt to define it. Two coaches put this view forward, i.e. the definition of successful coaching is in the hand of the client.

The client defines whether or not if it [coaching] has been successful or not. (coach 1)

Successful coaching is when the coachee feels he or she has got added value from it and I know it often because I do ask for it [feedback]. (coach 4)

5.2.2 Characteristics of unsuccessful coaching

The three main topics that rise from the question related to elements of unsuccessful coaching are *poor execution*, *limiting characteristics of a coachee* and *a coachee's poor motivation* and *external interference* in the coaching process.

Comments related to *poor execution* were connected to items such as an unskilled coach and issues with the coaching process. Three of the interviewees mentioned that coaching cannot be thought of as successful if the agreed goals are not reached.

You always need to look at the failure with customer's goal in mind in my opinion. That is, if in some way the customer's goals are not met. At the same time, it is not the coach's responsibility to make sure that client's goal is reached. (coach 5)

According to the traditional definition, if the original goals have not been reached, then from a formal point of view, it would probably be considered a failure. (coach 3)

An obstructive element mentioned by two coaches is if the coach has their own agenda and does not follow the client's agenda.

If the Coach for example would start to steer the process according to his, or her, own values without respecting customer's goal. (coach 5)

Coach, who sets off on his own agenda and directs and advises and even demands things. (coach 6)

Poorly defined goals were mentioned by two coaches to also be elements that can result in unsuccessful coaching

It may also be a matter of whether the starting assumptions have been wrong and recognizing it may also be successful coaching. It is discovered that the goals are set incorrectly, somehow on the wrong foundation. (coach 2)

One coach mentioned that coaching cannot be successful if the client, or the client and the coach, are not intellectually present in the coaching moment. Another coach mentioned problems with the coaching process, e.g. the process is stagnant and does not proceed. In addition, another interviewee mentioned that in some cases the coachee could use the pretext that the coach is a bad coach even if the real issue would be something else.

Limiting characteristics of coachee and coachee's poor motivation were another major topic. Here the focus was on the coachee. The main themes that were highlighted by four interviewees were the reluctance of the coachee to take responsibility, the lack of motivation and reluctance or ability to immerse oneself in reflective activity and to delve.

The person is not genuinely capable of opening up to deeper reflection on his own context and situation. And does not therefore feel a desire for development. (coach 3)

If the coachee lacks motivation, desire to immerse oneself in deeper thinking and delve, then it is quite clear to me that coaching cannot succeed. (coach 1)

External interference can mean that the client feels that the coaching is managed from the outside by the sponsor. In this context it means that someone in the coachee's organisation interferes in some way with the coaching, or that there is a conflict with the sponsor's expectations and the client's expectations.

If it has been decided in the organization that all managers in position x will need to undergo coaching and it is rolled out. In these kind of processes it might be that it doesn't suite all, it's not the right method. In that case, it's kind of a failure. (coach 5)

The sponsor is too insistent and the coachee gets into a coaching situation that cannot be "unlocked", opened in a way that the coachee understands that it is his or her process. Sometimes the coached person experiences the whole coaching as a punishment, it rarely happens, but it does happen. (coach 6)

In addition to the three topics described above, some minor topics were as well set forth. *Incorrect understanding of what coaching is* was one of the topics that can be an inhibiting factor for effective coaching and it was mentioned by two coaches.

The coachee himself expects too much for instance counselling and expects answers [from coach] and asks all the time and does not realize that coachee can himself find solutions. (coach 6)

Coach hasn't told the coachee openly enough that it is the coachee's process where the coachee takes care about his own progress. That the role, coach's

role, is to keep that process going and to make sure the coaching is moving in the desired direction, but then all else is on coachee's responsibility. That coachees responsibility is in a way missing. (coach 7)

A coach can also feel that a coaching session has been unsuccessful if the client leaves the session in a *worse mental state* compared to the mental state the client was in when arriving to the session. Also, cases where the client is clearly disappointed or anguished with himself or herself as a result of the insight gathered during the coaching session were mentioned.

That the customer, like, somehow become agonised and frustrated and feels that it is somehow distressing. (coach 2)

The coachee leaves [coaching session] in a sadder spiritual mode than in which the coachee came. I'm not saying that a coaching session cannot sometimes be heavy. Often people still feel good, though it can be heavy. A person may start to cry, or something else. It can be some kind of painful thing that I ask a question about and that triggers that situation and I find that okay this is a pretty difficult thing. But somehow, the feeling that comes after that session is that that person left it empowered in some way, or an experience of immediate failure can come from me not noting, that the coachee has a "heavier mind" when he or she leaves [the session]. (coach 4)

One comment was related to the *unforeseen, or unintended result* of a coaching where the coachee realizes that the job she or he is doing is not the right one and quits the job. Another single comment was related to the fact that "*one can learn from everything*" even from an "unsuccessful" coaching.

In the end the coachee was not so terribly motivated and coachee quite [his or her job] so maybe it was just as good, a good thing for the sponsor. It all comes down to how success is defined. (coach 3)

On the other hand it felt like it failed. Nevertheless, somehow I think that even if it is not a mind boggling success... I think one can learn from everything... if the coach could just turn it to something like "what can we learn from this" even if it didn't work as planned. That too can be a success. (coach 1)

5.2.3 Limiting factors

Five distinguished topics were salient when asking about the limiting factors in coaching. These were that the *coaching method might not be suitable* for the coachee *coach lacking professionalism*, *sponsor's role* and *missing trust*.

Seventeen annotations were related to *coaching method might not be suitable* for the coachee. Of these seventeen annotations, eight were related to personal characters like client's reluctance or inability to immerse oneself and to delve, low or fragile self-esteem (self-deprecation), restrictive self-image, being too introvert or self-important. In other words, the client is somehow lacking personal resources or willingness to reflect whatever the reason is.

If a person is incapable of self-reflection then it is difficult. (coach 4)

Self-importance, how should it say it, an attitude that, yes, I actually already know everything that there is to know and I am the master and others just do not get it. (coach 2)

Two coaches made comments related to the importance of right timing.

That it is not the right method at that moment, the moment in time is wrong. That is, a person has too much of everything else that he or she cannot focus on, or think about, or have time for self-reflection. (coach 7)

Issues with client's commitment and lack of motivation were acknowledged by three interviewees.

Perhaps the most important thing is motivation. Is there any motivation for development. (coach 3)

One coach stated the situation when coachee's earlier and unprocessed distressful events emerge during coaching as an inhibiting factor.

Or if there is something that suddenly when there's the relationship of trust, that then some old, untreated things surface. Things that slow down one's [coachee's] own doing and one's own progress. Things that are no longer possible to deal with through coaching. (coach 7)

All, but two, mentioned as limiting factor if the *coach is lacking professionalism*. In total eleven comments were made related to this. Examples of this, given by two coaches, were that the coach is not professionally proficient, or that the coach has issues with interaction and cooperation with the client. Other elements that were mentioned related to the coach not correcting coachee's false or unrealistic starting assumptions, or that the coach has their own agenda when coaching.

Coach's too strong own agenda and does not respect client's own thinking and work, but starts to direct too much of the process for own reasons. (coach 6)

Single comments were made related to the coach being biased, or the goals being poorly defined and issues with the coaching process itself.

Sponsor's role, e.g. the organizations in which the coachee works, was mentioned in eight comments. These were related to the client feeling that his or her coaching is managed from outside by the sponsor, e.g. coachee is "forced" to participate in coaching. This might have an inhibiting effect on the coaching (four interviews mentioned this). Another inhibiting factor relates to a lack of support from the organization. Related to the

“managed from the outside” is also the fact that there can be conflicts between the sponsor's and the client's expectations that can affect the coaching. The sponsor can also try to influence the coaching process and sessions too much.

Lacking trust was explicitly commented by one of the interviewees as an inhibiting factor.

5.2.4 Contributing factors

Coachee's aptitude for coaching was the most prominent factor that was mentioned by the interviewees when they were asked for factors that according to their experience, contribute to a successful coaching experience. Other topics that were mentioned were *coach's professionalism, external support and a functioning dyadic coaching relation*.

There are a lot of factors that are associated with the coachee's aptitude for coaching. Totally there were 21 mentions related to this. The most common factor was that the coachee has confidence in coaching. This was mentioned by three respondents.

Two interviewees mentioned desire for coaching to be central element and two further mentioned coachee' willingness to develop as factors influencing a positive coaching outcome.

What helps, is that there is on the whole a positive expectation about what can be achieve with coaching. (coach 5)

Other elements related to coachee's proneness for coaching mentioned by two coaches for each of the element were that the coachee is intrinsically motivated, the coachee has self-confidence and that the coachee has the ability for self-reflection. Coachee's *life situation* was also mentioned to be of importance, i.e. that the client has the resources and time to engage in coaching.

It may sound funny but good self-esteem. That the person, in a way, dare to throw her- or himself into that [process] with a stranger. (coach 4)

Then that there is some self reflection skill... In a way, it is not always linked to the position a person has. There are many senior leaders who have just used their ego and given orders and orders and have not yet had the ability to self-reflection, like “Hey how does this affects others?”. So, there can be just as much work to be done with them. (coach 7)

The following topics were mentioned by one coach for each topic. The coachee and organization see a *clear need for coaching* and that coachee has a realistic understanding of what can be *achieved by coaching*. One respondent also mentioned the ability of the client to “dare to dream big”.

Ten comments related to coach's *professionalism* were made. Of these ten comments *ICF Core Competencies* and *Coach's presence* in the coaching situation got three comments each from the respondents.

That the Core Competencies are taken care of. Coach is coaching with the coaches agenda in mind whatever the result will be. Enough time has been used to make the [coaching] agreement, in so that there is a common understanding of what can be achieved with a coaching, that tripartite [discussion with coachee, sponsor and coach]. By ensuring that it is done carefully enough, it can correct any distortions in expectations. (coach 6)

Comments related to coach's professionalism that were made by single coaches were that the coach follows the coachees agenda, coach has flexibility when changes occur and that the planning of the coaching process has been adequate.

Related to external support each of the three annotations were highlighted by three different coaches. These were *support from boss*, that the *coaching is supported by the "organizational thinking"* and that coach, coachee and sponsor have a clear and common understanding when making the coaching agreement.

Concerning the functioning dyadic coaching relation, five respondents emphasized the importance of a *good dyadic relation*. Three mentioned the importance of *trust* and one respondent mentioned the importance of an *active dialogue*.

5.3 THEME 2: Tools and methods

5.3.1 Tools used

The question related to tools produced three large topics groups, namely *visualization* as a tool (totally 17 comments touched upon this subject), *personality tests* and *coaching is not tool centred*. In addition, *kinaesthetic tools* were mentioned three times and then other more sporadic comments were made by single coaches.

Related to *visualization as a tool*, only one topic was mentioned by altogether two coaches, namely *visualization of interrelationship with others*. All other tools under visualization were mentioned by only one coach for each comment.

They can be any particular way to illustrate time usage or interdependency. I like to use pen and paper quite a lot. Then I also sometimes use small objects, which in a way can be used to model different things, and then looking at the objects you can get that distance to that thing. (coach 1)

There were many comments about tools used, but they were only mentioned by one coach in each. For instance, there were individual mentions of visualization through drawing, using of pen and paper, using a flip chart and marker pens and using Post-it®.

Other means or tools mentioned included taking photographs and analysing them, making lists with key words, or using line segments or fourfold tables. Mindmaps and scales, e.g. “On 1-10 how do you see the situation?” were also mentioned as tools to visualize and conceptualize different situations.

Making visible through visualisation was mentioned by one coach as well as using visualization to map a client’s strengths, or time usage.

Different kinds of personality tests were mentioned in eight comments. These tests were mainly used in the beginning of coaching to get to know the client and the client’s personality and also to help the client to realize traits that he or she might possess. Of these tools related to personality tests only two tools were mentioned by two coaches for each of the two tools. These were DiSC personality assessment and Myers–Briggs Type Indicator to understand natural tendencies.

For all the other tools, only one coach mentioned each of the tools. These were 360-degree feedback assessment, Resilience Profile, Work Personality Inventory (WOPI) and WorkPlace Big Five Profile™.

Especially in coaching of managers and directors, I start with some self-evaluation method, such as: workplace WorkPlace Big Five, Meyers-Briggs, Disc or WOPI. With some method that helps in self-knowledge, because it helps me to understand the mindset of the coachee. It can even become a goal for the coachee. For example, if a leader becomes aware that he or she is not listening to others, improving that may become a goal for coaching. (coach 6)

Seven comments related to the view that coaching is *not tool centred* were made by four respondents. Three respondents did consequently not voice this opinion. One coach made a comment that the coach is the most important tool and one coach mentioned that he had tried some tools, but that it had not felt natural and thus not necessary to use them. One coach highlighted that he or she trusts own abilities to process things through discussions.

In my opinion, however, coaching is not a “tool first” approach, but a tool may at some point bring something essential in addition. (coach 5)

Different kind of *kinaesthetic tools* were mentioned three times by two respondents. The method was described to consist of moving around in the room, or sitting down on different chairs to model different situations.

One coach mentioned the use of Hehku emotion bricks.

... they make it easier to externalise [feelings]. For example, a manager may wonder what his or her own strengths are and how they appear at work. After that, the manager can think about what more would be needed. What the team would need or long for and then we can think about that more and begin to work on that. (coach 7)

More sporadic comments were made by single coaches related to use of some elements of NLP, coach giving examples of situation in another organizations, use of observations and use of associations like stepping into someone else's shoes. One coach mentioned tasks to be done between sessions and one pointed out that selected strategies and tools are situationally dependent.

5.3.2 Methods used

Question "What methods do you possibly use in coaching?" got significantly less responses than question "What tools do you possibly use?". Three respondents mentioned that they use basic coaching methods, e.g. active listening and open questions.

The use of the GROW² model was mentioned by three interviewees. One coach also mentioned in connection to the GROW model the need to get detached from the model and not to follow it too carefully.

Then, of course, there is this kind of GROW thinking in the background. First we go through in what direction we want to proceed, what we want and then we think a little bit about where we are and what we can draw from past [experiences]. Now there is a need to get away from the GROW models. Right now the focus is much more on active listening. However, there has to be the goal of the discussion, so that both parties understand what is desired as an outcome from the discussion. Then at the end you [coachee] have to crystallize what coachee got from this. But it's not that kind of a super simple straightforward process anymore [compared to when coach started to coach]. (coach 7)

Three respondents mentioned use of visualisation as a method. Of these three respondents, two had also mentioned visualization when asking about the tools they use.

In addition, one respondent per each of the topic mentioned that elements from NLP was used, that WorkPlace Big Five Profile™ was used as a method and one coach considered pausing at the beginning of the coaching session to be a method. Finally, one coach stated that selecting the method depends on client's needs.

5.4 THEME 3: Adult learning processes

Theme three was related to coaches view on adult learning and the inquire was "What kind of learning or learning processes do you think are associated with coaching?"

² GROW stands for Goal, Reality, Options and What (will you do?). The model is useful especially for beginners, since it provides a good framework for the coaching session and it helps to remember to consider reality before jumping into options (Rogers, 2016, pp. 99-100).

The topic groups that respondents mentioned were *awareness building*, *active learning*, *identity building*, *constructivist learning*, *transactional learning*, *learning to learn*, *internal process*, *conceptual thinking*, *practical skill* and that the learning experience is a "complete" process.

The group *awareness building* got thirty-two comments, or quotes. All but one coach, that is six coaches out of seven, mentioned awareness building as the process being at play in coaching related to adult learning.

... Such awareness... they do not kind of know what they are doing; they are not aware of all that is happening or how it is happening. But their own course of action or their routine like paradigms are becoming visible. I would somehow think that it involves learning. ... through that, they become aware and they realize, that "wait a minute, now I somehow see the big picture more clearly. Now I see my own thinking, or I see my own way of doing." Because I believe that if we want change then somehow we must first be aware of how we do these things currently. (coach 1)

Related to the *building of awareness* were the comments about the client *becoming conscious and understanding one's way of behaving in certain situations*. Five of the seven respondents mentioned this.

Learning about oneself and one's way of thinking and making one's own course of action and routine-like way of thinking visible were both mentioned by four coaches.

It's learning about how I act. How I think. So coaching is an insanely good method because it forces to think deeper about... how I think about this thing and what is my thinking based on. (coach 7)

Becoming aware of one's inner voice, see one's train of thought and how it affects one's behaviour and actions and understanding one's role in the whole system and how the parts interact were mentioned by three respondents for each of the topic.

Two interviewees made comments related to *building of awareness* that *learning about one's own internal restrictions and dismantling them* and *renewal of one's thought process and developing of a higher consciousness*.

Learning is also about learning how to use your own resources in a better way, and that's exactly what coaching supports. Learn to recognize your own limitations and sort of unlock them and thereby improve yourself in what you do. (coach 2)

Learns in a way the ability to support oneself as a learner. It comes with these meta-cognitive skills in a way and then maybe that learning is always as the big reference frame. (coach 6)

The next class or group that got eight annotations was *active learning*. Here, three topics got two comments each and the topics, or under groups were *learning by doing*, *trial and error* (i.e. to find out what works and what not) and *considering different point of views and course of action*. Topics related to *embracing new habits and to integrate them to own activity* was mentioned by one coach and *concrete changes in one's everyday life* was mentioned by one coach.

I was thinking about hands-on learning in practice. I mean start to take some new idea, some way of working, into practice ... Try out how it works. Then, in practice, through trial and error, find out what works and what does not. Then you can adjust it [if needed]... I always strive to do things in practice. To bring those insights out there and test them and in a way get feedback. (coach 1)

They can be like adopting or integrating new ways into own doing. (coach 1)

Topic group *identity building* got three annotations and the comments were related to *becoming aware of one's identity as a boss*, *deeper renewal on identity level* and *strengthening one's self-esteem*.

Topic groups *constructivist learning and reordering of old, transactional learning* and *learning to learn* were each mentioned by two coaches.

Coaching is, therefore, essentially a constructivist concept of learning. That new things are built on top of the old and existing. It's not about pouring in new one [knowledge], not really learning the that sense, it's about reorganizing the old into a new order. (coach 2)

The following received one comment each *internal process*, *conceptual thinking*, *Self-management* and that the learning experience is a *holistic process*.

The fact that the coach also learns were highlighted in six annotations by four coaches. These were related to coach's learning *different ways of thinking and relating to the world*, *learning about oneself*, about *coaching and how to approach different type of clients* and *learning about a specific industry* that the client works in.

coach also learns about coaching all the time. How differently people can think and perceive things. (coach 6)

5.5 THEME 4: ICF Core Competencies and learning

At the beginning of theme 4 I showed a list of ICF Core Competencies to the participant (appendix 1). The list contained the four groups of core competence areas. These are A. Setting the Foundation, B. Co-creating the Relationship, C. Communicating Effectively and D. Facilitating Learning and Results. The four areas are then respectively divided to

totally eleven sub points. The question asked at the interview was: “Which of these core skills do you think will contribute to learning in coaching?”

All of the four groups of core competence areas were mentioned. The group that received most comments was *Facilitating Learning and Results* with sixteen annotations, followed by *Communicating Effectively*, *Co-creating the Relationship* and *Setting the Foundation*. Worth noting is that *Establishing Trust & Intimacy with the Client* (group: Co-creating the Relationship) was mentioned by five respondents to be important, whilst all the other comments made for a specific competence had at most four respondents referring to them.

Related to *Facilitating Learning and Results*, point 8. Creating Awareness was mentioned by four respondents. Three respondents mentioned 10. *Planning & Goal Setting*. Three respondents also mentioned the whole group *D. Facilitating Learning and Results*. *Facilitating Learning and Results* is one of the main four groups so in this sense mentioning *Facilitating Learning and Results* could be interpreted, as all of the items mentioned in this group are important.

So this awareness-raising... is probably the most important, or at least very central, aspect of learning, especially in a coaching context where learning happens at many levels. It's on how, what and who levels. Opening up of own beliefs and removing internal barriers and using own resources differently than before and recognizing them. And all this has to do with becoming conscious, raising awareness. (coach 2)

Managing Progress & Accountability and *Designing Actions* was explicitly mentioned by two respondents. While *Creating Awareness in the coachee to challenge his or her established thoughts* and *Wrap up at the end of the sessions* were each mentioned by one respondent respectively.

Group *Communicating Effectively* got thirteen annotations. Of these 4. *Coaching Presence* and 6. *Powerful Questioning* got both four comments. Point 7. *Direct Communication* got three comments, 5.2. *Hears the client's concerns, goals, values and beliefs about what is and is not possible* was mentioned by one respondent. Related to 6. *Powerful Questioning* one respondent commented that a coach could also, by mistake, make questions that may “break things”.

That it can be done with right balance... in a way direct communication can also break the learning process or then build it. (coach 5)

Group *Co-creating the Relationship* got six annotations, of which 3. *Establishing Trust & Intimacy with the Client - Ability to create a safe, supportive environment that produces ongoing mutual respect and trust* was mentioned by five respondents out of seven. This point got the highest number of individual answers in theme 4 of the survey four related to the theme of ICF core competencies that contribute to learning. One respondent mentioned that, the whole chapter *B. Co-Creating the Relationship* is relevant.

At the very core is confidence and closeness. Without trust there is pretty much nothing. (coach 6)

If one were to choose perhaps the most important item that enables learning and development, then trust is the most important, definitely that trust, and in my opinion, it also involves being present in the coaching process. It's hard for me to imagine having good trust and a close coaching relationship if it lacks presence. Somehow, they go hand in hand and also that active listening. (coach 7)

Point A. *Setting the Foundation* was mentioned four times in total. Of these, four times section 2. *Establishing the Coaching Agreement* was mentioned by two coaches and section 1. *Meeting Ethical Guidelines & Professional Standards* was mentioned once. The whole group A. *Setting the Foundation* was mentioned once.

Laying the foundation. compliance with ethical guidelines and professional standards. Drawing up a Coaching Agreement. They set the basic security in a way and in a state of basic security, people are usually a little more "open". (coach 5)

In addition, to these clear references to a certain part of the ICF Core Competencies document, there were some more general comments. One coach commented that 9. *Designing Actions* and 10. *Planning & Goal Setting* are a bit overlapping.

One respondent commented that different core competencies are easy to execute depending on coaches' background. Another respondent commented that the Core Competencies are surprisingly good and that it comes down to how the coaches execute the core competencies. One coach mentioned that all Core Competencies are important.

I think these are surprisingly good. You notice, that they have done a thorough job when they have been thinking about these and putting them together. All of these are relevant to my mind. The problem is more related to the how they are implemented by a coach. (coach 3)

In the end of the interview, the closure question related to whether anything might have come to the respondent's mind that the respondent would have liked to add, or thought that was important for the survey.

One respondent highlighted the role of coaching for a CEO. The respondent pointed out that self-reflection and self-awareness is emphasised in executive coaching with a CEO.

A CEO has quite a lonely role in the company and does not necessarily have the opportunity to voice her or his thought freely in the company. The coaching session thus provides a safe place for CEOs to reflect openly. The same respondents also highlighted the item from systems thinking perspective since a CEO has more power to make quick changes and thus the changes made based on insights from coaching can have quite a far reaching impact on the whole organization.

6 Reliability

As discussed in *Ethics* chapter I am a certified business coach and whilst this potentially increases my ability to understand the underlying phenomenon it could potentially affect the study and the results due to positive or negative bias. I paid special attention to this fact during my interviews and during the whole research process and tried to maintain my objectivity when doing research at all time. At the beginning of the interview, I made sure that each research subject knew their rights and pointed out that the interviews were anonymous and that the identity of the individual respondents was not to be disclosed at any time. I also made clear that the respondents had the right to withdraw from the study at any time and that the participants had the right not to answer a specific question if they did not want to. I believe this should increase the confidence level of the respondents that they could speak freely.

To avoid the pitfalls outlined by Denscombe (2014, p. 283), mentioned in Chapter 4.3.3 *Possible issues with the research design*, I put emphasis on not getting involved in a discussion related to the respondents answers. I was careful only to ask clarifying questions when needed. I have also paid special attention to avoid the potential problem that might have arisen if I performed the clustering using my practical and theoretical experience of the phenomenon being studied without being aware of this. This risk was avoided, or at least minimized, by carefully and deliberately thinking through every solution I made when creating categories. In addition, the fact that I mentioned direct citations in the analysis part of this master's thesis should alleviate the issue and also make it easier for the reader to follow my train of thought.

Another potential challenges that I needed to take into account was not to allow a certain theory, or theories, to influence the analysis when creating sub-classes, or clustering sub-classes into appropriate super-classes.

As mentioned in chapter 4.3.3 *Possible issues with the research design*, the central challenge of the theory-guided content analysis, that I used in my master thesis, is that I had to be able to extract expressions and topics from the interview material without allowing any given theory to influence my choice (Tuomi & Sarajärvi, 2018, p. 133). In order to avoid being influenced by the adult theories that I used as framework, I did not check these theories during the analysis stage. I approached the data in terms of raw data and only once the data analysis stage had been completed I begun to reflect over the possible connections with the various adult learning theories I had chosen as framework. In

this way, I made an attempt not to “force” the themes found to fit into some suitable theory.

In practical terms I also made a final verification of the classification when writing the final results. I used the Excel sheet with the categories together with the coding that I made in the research software Atlas.ti. I verified at this stage repeatedly that the comments that had been coded were in line with the class, or category, itself. I considered at the theories again only when writing the analysis and discussion chapter.

7 Analysis and discussion

The aim with this paper was to examine four main themes related to coaching, namely adult learning processes and phenomenon in coaching, tools and methods used by coaches to facilitate learning, elements that contribute to learning and elements that inhibit learning and most relevant ICF Core competencies that contribute to learning. From this framework stemmed two research questions, i.e. which adult learning processes and phenomenon are at play in coaching and what are the enablers contributing to positive outcome in coaching and what are the inhibitors.

The research was based on interviews. To facilitate the elicitation the sequence of questions in the interviews was structured so that it went from more general questions related to coaching to more specific. The aim was that the interviewees would feel comfortable and aided by the structure to move from more concrete topics to more abstract topics, i.e. processes related to learning. However, in this chapter I will start with the learning processes and then move on to the enablers that contribute and inhibitors that inhibit learning in coaching.

The base for the discussion is the question related to the essence of coaching. Based on the responses coaching can be seen as a goal oriented supportive action that is based on a dyadic relationship built on trust. It can also be seen as a philosophy and a method.

Coaching as a philosophy and method has many aspects. It is about maximizing client's potential and it is a philosophy related to view on life and idea of man. It is based on the idea that people have potential that they are not using to full. It is about reflective learning and learning also from negative experiences. Like one coach put it "I think one can learn from everything". Here we are at the essence of Dewey's thinking. According to Dewey learning takes place even in cases where the outcome of testing a hypothesis is not positive (Miettinen, 20002, p. 65).

The underlying assumption in coaching is that human beings can change. I argue that this believe, or view on human beings, is the same for andragogy, experiential learning and transformative learning. Otherwise, there would not be a need for any of these theories, they would not exist. Consequently, the concept of change becomes crucial. Change in this context means a visible change in behaviour or attitude (Cox et al., 2014, p. 6). Change is explicitly mentioned in andragogy (Knowles et al., 2005, p. 125; Cox,

2006, pp. 29-30) and transformative learning (Mezirow, 1997, p. 5). All of the respondents also mentioned it in one way or the other. Experimental learning also implicitly refer to change (Dewey, 1953, p. 27; Miettinen, 2000, p. 65; Dewey, 1949, pp. 94-95). The change happen voluntarily and through reflection, a reflection that questions one's existing assumptions and beliefs.

In coaching, the coach is there to support and to keep the learning process moving. The client alone is responsible for the results. This is a very important philosophical component in coaching. Due to this, it is very important that the coach discuss and explain the process and the principles of coaching to the client to ensure that there is mutual and very clear understanding what coaching is. Preparing the learner is the first step in andragogy learning process (Knowles et al., 2005, p. 115). The "culture-shock" need to be mitigated and the learner need to be explained concepts like being a proactive learner, identifying the resources the learner already possesses and establishing a collaborative relationship. Here we can see a linkage to Knowles' andragogy theory. Knowles claim that andragogy is a process model (Knowles et al., 2005, p 115) in which that the educator, coach in this case, has not established in advance what the learning session is about and in which the coach is responsible for the process, but the learner is responsible for the result, i.e. what is learnt. The concept of using learner's available potential to its full resonates also well with the andragogy. In andragogy, the realisation of how acquired knowledge and skills will enhance the ability of the learner to perform better in life is important. That realisation also gives the learning situation a clear sense of purpose and the learning is truly personal (Knowles et al., 2005, p. 125).

The supportive aspect in coaching is about forming a partnership based on trust and an open dialogue. Once the safe environment is created, then it is also safe to challenge client's thinking in a respectful way. This enable the client to consider matters from different angles, to explore new perspectives and habits. The coach only facilitates the coachee in finding his or her strengths, resources and solutions. The viewpoint that the coach is a facilitator resonates well with the view that andragogy embraces; the "teacher" is a facilitator or change agent (Knowles et al., 2005, p 115). According to experiential learning, people make meaning from their experiences through conversations. Trust is needed to unlock the blockers like fear and anxiety in these conversations (Kolb & Kolb, 2002, 207-208).

In addition, also supportive action was mentioned by the respondents and it had clear linkage to learning. Supports clients thinking and reflection process result in supporting

client's development. Action follows, as a result of the thinking and reflection process. The responsibility of action belong to the learner, the coachee. A central point in Dewey's thinking (Miettinen, 2000, p. 65) is the reconstructive and reflective way of acting. As a result of the reflective thinking there is action. The testing of the hypothesis by action is the end result in Dewey's thinking (Miettinen, 2000, pp. 66-67). As the interviewees pointed out in this study, so do also Dewey point out, that the "testing" in practise can be either successful, or unsuccessful. The support also consist in learning the client to learn and in accelerating client's learning process. Mezirow (1997, pp. 223-224) describes how, in transformative learning, the educator assist the learner to focus on and examine own assumptions. The educator assists learners in their though process and help learners to be more open and adopt alternative points of view. This is fundamental for coaching as described by the interviewed coaches.

Looking at elements that contribute to learning and elements that inhibit learning we see that successful coaching strives to build awareness. All but one respondent in the study mentioned this as an indication of successful coaching. The other important element is that client undergo durable and concrete change in client's way of thinking and acting as a result of the awareness. Part of this transformation and increased awareness is about the client becoming conscious and understanding one's way of behaving. Transformative learning require awareness of the context of one's beliefs and feelings according to Mezirow (1991, p. 161). At core of transformative learning is durable change in which the frame of reference is changed significantly (Mezirow, 1997, p. 5). A similar thinking was described by the respondents in this study. Miettinen (2000, p. 65) pointed out that replacing habitual ways of thinking and acting with "reconstructive" and reflective way of acting is fundamental to Dewey's thinking. In other words, durable change in a person's way of thinking and acting.

Coachee's personal characteristics or life situation can be an accelerating success factor or an obstructing factor. Central for a positive outcome in coaching are motivation, ability and willingness to engage in reflective activities. Reflective learning is crucial in transformative learning according to Mezirow (1997, pp. 6, 13-15) and it involves readiness to assess and reassess own assumptions. Reflective learning turn into transformation when assumptions are discovered to be distorted, inauthentic, and thus invalid and as a result new or transformed meaning schemes can be formed (Mezirow, 1991, p. 6). Dewey also put emphasis on reflective learning and according to Miettinen (2000, pp. 66-67) reflective events happen in several of the phases of reflective learning.

Action is a fundamental element in coaching. Coaching is exercised to create action and change that takes the coachee towards a set goal. According to Kolb and Kolb (2005, pp. 207- 208) action can often be seen as the most important part of the learning cycle where internal reflection turns into external activity. In Dewey's model of reflective thought and action (Miettinen, 2000, p. 65) the last stage is about trying out a hypothesis in action. Mezirow (1991, p. 161), on the other hand, point out that taking action is an essential dimension of transformative learning. Like in coaching reflective action is crucial for transformative learning (Mezirow, 1997, pp. 13-15) and experiential learning (Kolb & Kolb, 2005, p. 194, Miettinen, 2000, p.p. 61-62, 65-67). In Andragogy one of the departing assumption is that adult learners have a wealth of prior experience (Cox, 2006, pp.29-30). In order to use that experience reflection is obviously needed.

The ability to engage in reflective activity can be obstructed by factors that are beyond the coachee's influence, like sudden loss of a near person. Work situation can be such that the person simply does not have resources for coaching at that moment in time. In case the ability to reflect is weak it can be trained, as mentioned by an interviewee, if the coachee is motivated to develop the reflective abilities. And bluntly said; coaching is not a suitable method for everyone and every situation. This is an important consideration to keep in mind as well. To have enough time to thinking through things is something that Kolb's (Kolb, 1984, p. 40-43, Kolb & Kolb, 2005, p. 194) mention. Transformative learning and experiential learning both emphasizes reflection. As Jarvis (2010, p. 106) point out sufficient time is needed to reflect deeply.

Many of the respondents in the survey mentioned motivation. Andragogy consider that adults are internally motivated to solve problems they personally consider being relevant (Cox, 2006, pp.29-30). Dewey mentions learner's motivation and learner's "wills to exercise" that motivation and make a remark that people nevertheless often "loath" to do it (Dewey, 1967, pp. 334-335).

Taken that coaching is a dyadic relationship it is of no surprise that the coach's personal characteristics are important as well. In order for a good coaching experience to take place the coach need to be client focused. The coach need to respect the basic coaching skills like active listening, being present in the moment and working according to the coachee's agenda. Andragogy (Knowles et al., 2005, pp. 115, 125-126; Cox, 2006, pp.29-30), experiential learning (Dewey, 1949, pp. 94-95; Kolb & Kolb, 2005, p. 194; Miettinen, 2000, p. 66-67) and transformative learning (Mezirow, 1997, pp. 5, 161, 223-224) are all client focused. They emphasize the learner and learner's needs experiences

and goals. In order to embrace this active listening and being present in the moment are prerequisites for a successful outcome.

Coachee's and coach's role cannot be discussed only separately. Coaching is a dyadic relationship and it is fundamental that this relationship is based on trust and is working properly. Only in a working relationship based on trust an active and honest dialog can flourish. The coaching session can sometimes be distressing as we learnt from the interviewees. Sometimes the coachee might leave the session in worse mental state that in which he, or she, came to the session. That is one of the characteristics of coaching. Changing ones beliefs and changing one's frame of reference can occasionally be an unpleasant experience that turns into something good over time.

Reflective dialogue is the prerequisite for learning and acting in transformational learning (Mezirow, 1997, pp. 223-224). Considering the nature of andragogy and experiential learning I would say that they cannot exist without an open dialogue. In transformational learning the concept of change of frame of reference is touched upon and transformational learning happens with changes in the frame of reference (Mezirow, 1997, p. 5) and they can be difficult to change. Kolb and Kolb (2005, pp. 207- 208) mention that fear, anxiety and other negative emotions can block learning. Blocks that need to be faced and dismantled in order to produce change. Trust and functional dyadic relationship enables a fertile breeding ground for dismantling, even painful, existing barriers that hinder learning and development.

Coaching does not happen in a vacuum. The organizational setting often is the framework in which the development happen. Coaching often has a triadic aspect as well . In the extreme, the unforeseen result of coaching in an organizational setting can be that the coachee realizes that he or she want to change job. Besides this, the support from the organization can be beneficial or harmful for the coaching process. Too much interference from the sponsor and forced coaching offer a challenging ground for coaching. On the other hand, an organization that supports coaching and a supporting manager that creates the environment for growth can constitute important factors in a successful coaching.

Coaching is not a "tool first" approach, it is not tool centred. Usage of tools is context dependent. Tools are at times used when they are seen appropriate, but discussion is clearly at the core of coaching. Nevertheless, techniques like visualization and kinaesthetic can be used to aid the coachee to approach her or his matter from a different angle.

In some cases, personality tests can be used to accelerate the introduction phase of getting to know the coachee and to get the coachee to understand his or her strengths and possible shortcomings.

It seemed in some way difficult for the interviewed coaches to answer to the question related to the method or methods they use. Maybe the difficulty spurred from the fact that coaching is already a method per se. Somehow it is hidden, or secondary, and I think that the evidence of this is that only three out of seven coaches mentioned that coaching is a method per se. It might be that confusion was created from the fact that I first asked respondents about tools they used and then about methods they use. Considering all answers totally four coaches out of seven explicitly mentioned coaching as a method. Maybe this is a result of the fact that coaching has borrowed ingredients from many other disciplines (Cox et al., 2014, p. 1).

All of the four groups of ICF Core Competence areas contribute to learning according to the interviewees. One interviewee's answer that the Core Competencies are surprisingly good. This might be the reason why all part were seen relevant. One could argue that this is to some extent a circular reasoning, a logical fallacy, since all ICF coaches have undergone education in which ICF Core Competencies are internalised and ICF coaches need to adhere to them. Naturally, one could reason, that coaches are subsequently bound to think that these competencies are good. In some way the Core Competencies are embedded in every coach's mind. At the same time I do not think that coaches think about them consciously all the time. My supporting argument for this is that only three respondents mentioned ICF Core Competencies before I explicitly showed them the list of ICF Core Competencies. Bearing in mind that the Core Competencies seem to take a holistic stance on all elements of coaching, it is not surprising that coaches claim that all the competencies are in one way or the other important. It is not surprisingly either, that the section called *Facilitating Learning and Results* was seen as the most relevant when it comes to foster learning. Based on the survey it is not possible to say that any of the Core Competences would be more important or more geared towards fostering learning besides *Facilitating Learning and Results*. The result also reveals, in my mind, that adult learning is a holistic experience and process. A holistic process that the adult learning theorist have shown. A holistic process that have been understood and taken into account when drawing up the core competencies.

As a conclusion to the question, what adult learning processes are at play in coaching it can be observed that there are several processes, or parts to the process, at play. It is

about reflective activity, which create awareness, that then trigger action. In turn, an action with successful outcome, when a tested hypothesis proves effective, creates a durable and concrete change, or transformation, in the way of thinking and acting in the person. All three adult learning theories, that provided the framework for this study, are in one way or the other relevant. They have some elements in common, like the emphasis of prior experience and reflection, being action oriented and client focused. However, none of the theories can alone explain the learning processes that happen in coaching. Andragogy provides a good framework for the overall practical process steps in coaching. Experiential learning provides a good framework in explaining the process of reflective thought, hypothesis testing and action. Transformative learning, on the other hand, provide an understanding of the processes that happen when the testing of hypothesis succeed and transformation occurs in the learner.

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Appendices

Appendix 1: ICF Core Competencies

ICF Core Competencies

Core Competencies

The following eleven core coaching competencies were developed to support greater understanding about the skills and approaches used within today's coaching profession as defined by the International Coach Federation. They will also support you in calibrating the level of alignment between the coach-specific training expected and the training you have experienced.

Finally, these competencies and the ICF definition were used as the foundation for the ICF Coach Knowledge Assessment (CKA). The ICF defines coaching as partnering with clients in a thought-provoking and creative process that inspires them to maximize their personal and professional potential. The Core Competencies are grouped into four clusters according to those that fit together logically based on common ways of looking at the competencies in each group. The groupings and individual competencies are not weighted—they do not represent any kind of priority in that they are all core or critical for any competent coach to demonstrate.

A. Setting the Foundation

1. Meeting Ethical Guidelines and Professional Standards
2. Establishing the Coaching Agreement

B. Co-creating the Relationship

3. Establishing Trust and Intimacy with the Client
4. Coaching Presence

C. Communicating Effectively

5. Active Listening
6. Powerful Questioning
7. Direct Communication

D. Facilitating Learning and Results

8. Creating Awareness
9. Designing Actions
10. Planning and Goal Setting
11. Managing Progress and Accountability

A. Setting the Foundation

1. Meeting Ethical Guidelines and Professional Standards—Understanding of coaching ethics and standards and ability to apply them appropriately in all coaching situations.

1. Understands and exhibits in own behaviors the ICF Code of Ethics (see Code, Part III of ICF Code of Ethics).
2. Understands and follows all ICF Ethical Guidelines.
3. Clearly communicates the distinctions between coaching, consulting, psychotherapy and other support professions.
4. Refers client to another support professional as needed, knowing when this is needed and the available resources.

2. Establishing the Coaching Agreement—Ability to understand what is required in the specific coaching interaction and to come to agreement with the prospective and new client about the coaching process and relationship.

1. Understands and effectively discusses with the client the guidelines and specific parameters of the coaching relationship (e.g., logistics, fees, scheduling, inclusion of others if appropriate).
2. Reaches agreement about what is appropriate in the relationship and what is not, what is and is not being offered, and about the client's and coach's responsibilities.
3. Determines whether there is an effective match between his/her coaching method and the needs of the prospective client.

B. Co-Creating the Relationship

3. Establishing Trust and Intimacy with the Client—Ability to create a safe, supportive environment that produces ongoing mutual respect and trust.

1. Shows genuine concern for the client's welfare and future.
2. Continuously demonstrates personal integrity, honesty and sincerity.
3. Establishes clear agreements and keeps promises.
4. Demonstrates respect for client's perceptions, learning style, personal being.
5. Provides ongoing support for and champions new behaviors and actions, including those involving risk-taking and fear of failure.
6. Asks permission to coach client in sensitive, new areas.

4. Coaching Presence—Ability to be fully conscious and create spontaneous relationship with the client, employing a style that is open, flexible and confident.

1. Is present and flexible during the coaching process, dancing in the moment.
2. Accesses own intuition and trusts one's inner knowing—"goes with the gut."
3. Is open to not knowing and takes risks.
4. Sees many ways to work with the client and chooses in the moment what is most effective.
5. Uses humor effectively to create lightness and energy.
6. Confidently shifts perspectives and experiments with new possibilities for own action.
7. Demonstrates confidence in working with strong emotions and can self-manage and not be overpowered or enmeshed by client's emotions.

C. Communicating Effectively

5. Active Listening—Ability to focus completely on what the client is saying and is not saying, to understand the meaning of what is said in the context of the client's desires, and to support client self-expression.

1. Attends to the client and the client's agenda and not to the coach's agenda for the client.
2. Hears the client's concerns, goals, values and beliefs about what is and is not possible.
3. Distinguishes between the words, the tone of voice, and the body language.
4. Summarizes, paraphrases, reiterates, and mirrors back what client has said to ensure clarity and understanding.
5. Encourages, accepts, explores and reinforces the client's expression of feelings, perceptions, concerns, beliefs, suggestions, etc.
6. Integrates and builds on client's ideas and suggestions.
7. "Bottom-lines" or understands the essence of the client's communication and helps the client get there rather than engaging in long, descriptive stories.
8. Allows the client to vent or "clear" the situation without judgment or attachment in order to move on to next steps.

6. Powerful Questioning—Ability to ask questions that reveal the information needed for maximum benefit to the coaching relationship and the client.

1. Asks questions that reflect active listening and an understanding of the client's perspective.
2. Asks questions that evoke discovery, insight, commitment or action (e.g., those that challenge the client's assumptions).
3. Asks open-ended questions that create greater clarity, possibility or new learning.
4. Asks questions that move the client toward what they desire, not questions that ask for the client to justify or look backward.

7. Direct Communication—Ability to communicate effectively during coaching sessions, and to use language that has the greatest positive impact on the client.

1. Is clear, articulate and direct in sharing and providing feedback.
2. Reframes and articulates to help the client understand from another perspective what he/she wants or is uncertain about.
3. Clearly states coaching objectives, meeting agenda, and purpose of techniques or exercises.
4. Uses language appropriate and respectful to the client (e.g., non-sexist, non-racist, non-technical, non-jargon).
5. Uses metaphor and analogy to help to illustrate a point or paint a verbal picture.

D. Facilitating Learning and Results

8. Creating Awareness—Ability to integrate and accurately evaluate multiple sources of information and to make interpretations that help the client to gain awareness and thereby achieve agreed-upon results.

1. Goes beyond what is said in assessing client's concerns, not getting hooked by the client's description.
2. Invokes inquiry for greater understanding, awareness, and clarity.
3. Identifies for the client his/her underlying concerns; typical and fixed ways of perceiving himself/herself and the world; differences between the facts and the interpretation; and disparities between thoughts, feelings, and action.
4. Helps clients to discover for themselves the new thoughts, beliefs, perceptions, emotions, moods, etc. that strengthen their ability to take action and achieve what is important to them.

5. Communicates broader perspectives to clients and inspires commitment to shift their viewpoints and find new possibilities for action.
6. Helps clients to see the different, interrelated factors that affect them and their behaviors (e.g., thoughts, emotions, body, and background).
7. Expresses insights to clients in ways that are useful and meaningful for the client.
8. Identifies major strengths vs. major areas for learning and growth, and what is most important to address during coaching.
9. Asks the client to distinguish between trivial and significant issues, situational vs. recurring behaviors, when detecting a separation between what is being stated and what is being done.

9. Designing Actions—Ability to create with the client opportunities for ongoing learning, during coaching and in work/life situations, and for taking new actions that will most effectively lead to agreed-upon coaching results.

1. Brainstorms and assists the client to define actions that will enable the client to demonstrate, practice, and deepen new learning.
2. Helps the client to focus on and systematically explore specific concerns and opportunities that are central to agreed-upon coaching goals.
3. Engages the client to explore alternative ideas and solutions, to evaluate options, and to make related decisions.
4. Promotes active experimentation and self-discovery, where the client applies what has been discussed and learned during sessions immediately afterward in his/her work or life setting.
5. Celebrates client successes and capabilities for future growth.
6. Challenges client's assumptions and perspectives to provoke new ideas and find new possibilities for action.
7. Advocates or brings forward points of view that are aligned with client goals and, without attachment, engages the client to consider them.
8. Helps the client "Do It Now" during the coaching session, providing immediate support.
9. Encourages stretches and challenges but also a comfortable pace of learning.

10. Planning and Goal Setting—Ability to develop and maintain an effective coaching plan with the client.

1. Consolidates collected information and establishes a coaching plan and development goals with the client that address concerns and major areas for learning and development.

2. Creates a plan with results that are attainable, measurable, specific, and have target dates.
3. Makes plan adjustments as warranted by the coaching process and by changes in the situation.
4. Helps the client identify and access different resources for learning (e.g., books, other professionals).
5. Identifies and targets early successes that are important to the client.

11. Managing Progress and Accountability—Ability to hold attention on what is important for the client, and to leave responsibility with the client to take action.

1. Clearly requests of the client actions that will move the client toward his/her stated goals.
2. Demonstrates follow-through by asking the client about those actions that the client committed to during the previous session(s).
3. Acknowledges the client for what they have done, not done, learned or become aware of since the previous coaching session(s).
4. Effectively prepares, organizes, and reviews with client information obtained during sessions.
5. Keeps the client on track between sessions by holding attention on the coaching plan and outcomes, agreed-upon courses of action, and topics for future session(s).
6. Focuses on the coaching plan but is also open to adjusting behaviors and actions based on the coaching process and shifts in direction during sessions.
7. Is able to move back and forth between the big picture of where the client is heading, setting a context for what is being discussed and where the client wishes to go.
8. Promotes client's self-discipline and holds the client accountable for what they say they are going to do, for the results of an intended action, or for a specific plan with related time frames.
9. Develops the client's ability to make decisions, address key concerns, and develop himself/herself (to get feedback, to determine priorities and set the pace of learning, to reflect on and learn from experiences).
10. Positively confronts the client with the fact that he/she did not take agreed-upon actions.

ICF (n.d.c).

Appendix 2: Interview questions in English and Finnish

Interview questions in English

Background information

- 1. What level of certification do you have (on certification path, ACC, PCC or MCC)?*
- 2. What is your educational background?*
- 3. How long have you been acting as a coach?*
- 4. What are your typical coaching customers?*
- 5. How many persons have you approximately been coaching in the last three months?*

Introduction

6. What is a coaching according to you?

THEME 1: Elements that contribute to learning and elements that inhibit learning

7. What is your idea of successful coaching?
8. What is your idea of unsuccessful coaching?
9. Which factors restrict, according to your experience, a successful coaching?
10. Which factors, according to your experience, contribute to a successful coaching?

THEME 2: Tools and methods used by coaches to facilitate learning

11. What tools do you possibly use?
12. What methods do you possibly use in coaching?

THEME 3: Adult learning processes and phenomenon in coaching

13. What kind of learning or learning processes do you think is associated with coaching?

THEME 4: Most relevant ICF core competencies that contribute to learning

14. (A list of ICF Core Competencies is showed to the participant, Appendix 1) Here are the eighteen ICF Core Competencies. Which of these core skills do you think will contribute to learning in coaching?

Closure

15. Does anything come your mind that you would like to add, in other words, did I for instance forget to ask something important?

Interview questions in Finnish

Taustatietoa

1. *Millä sertifiointitasolla olet (sertifiontipolulla oleva, ACC, PCC tai MCC)?*
2. *Mikä sinun koulutustaustasi on?*
3. *Kuinka pitkään olet toiminut coachina?*
4. *Millaisia ovat tyypillisimmät coaching asiakkaasi?*
5. *Montako henkilöä olet coachannut keskimäärin viimeisen kolmen kuukauden aikana?*

Johdanto

6. Mitä coaching sinun mielestäsi on?

TEEMA 1: Elementit, jotka edistävät oppimista ja elementit, jotka estävät oppimista

7. Mikä on mielestäsi onnistunut coachaus?
8. Mikä mielestäsi on epäonnistunut coachaus?
9. Mitkä tekijät rajoittavat, kokemuksesi mukaan, coachauksen onnistumisen?
10. Mitkä tekijät edesauttavat, kokemuksesi mukaan, coachauksen onnistumisen?

TEEMA 2: Coachien käyttämät työkalut ja menetelmät oppimisen helpottamiseksi

11. Mitä välineitä mahdollisesti käytät?
12. Mitä menetelmiä /metodeita mahdollisesti käytät coachingissa?

TEEMA 3: Aikuisoppimisen ilmiöt ja prosessit coachingissa

13. Mitä ajattelet, millaista oppimista tai millaisia oppimisprosesseja sinun mielestäsi coachingiin liittyy?

TEEMA 4: Tärkeimmät ICF: n ydinosaamiset, jotka edistävät oppimista

14. (Haastateltavalle näytetään ICH Core Competencies listaa, Appendix 1) Ohessa on ICF:n yhdeksäntoista ydintaitoa. Mitkä näistä ydintaidoista mielestäsi edesauttavat oppimista coachingissa?

Haastattelun päättäminen

15. Tuleeko sinulle mieleen vielä jotain, jota haluaisit vielä sanoa asiaan liittyen, ts. jätkö mielestäsi kysymättä jotakin tärkeää?

Appendix 3: Code of Ethics

Code of Ethics

ICF is committed to maintaining and promoting excellence in coaching. Therefore, ICF expects all members and credentialed coaches (coaches, coach mentors, coaching supervisors, coach trainers or students), to adhere to the elements and principles of ethical conduct: to be competent and integrate ICF Core Competencies effectively in their work. In line with the ICF core values and ICF definition of coaching, the Code of Ethics is designed to provide appropriate guidelines, accountability and enforceable standards of conduct for all ICF Members and ICF Credential-holders, who commit to abiding by the following ICF Code of Ethics:

Part One: Definitions

- **Coaching:** Coaching is partnering with clients in a thought-provoking and creative process that inspires them to maximize their personal and professional potential.
- **ICF Coach:** An ICF coach agrees to practice the ICF Core Competencies and pledges accountability to the ICF Code of Ethics.
- **Professional Coaching Relationship:** A professional coaching relationship exists when coaching includes an agreement (including contracts) that defines the responsibilities of each party.
- **Roles in the Coaching Relationship:** In order to clarify roles in the coaching relationship it is often necessary to distinguish between the client and the sponsor. In most cases, the client and sponsor are the same person and are therefore jointly referred to as the client. For purposes of identification, however, the ICF defines these roles as follows:
 - **Client:** The “Client/Coachee” is the person(s) being coached.
 - **Sponsor:** The “sponsor” is the entity (including its representatives) paying for and/or arranging for coaching services to be provided. In all cases, coaching engagement agreements should clearly establish the rights, roles and responsibilities for both the client and sponsor if the client and sponsor are different people.
 - **Student:** The “student” is someone enrolled in a coach training program or working with a coaching supervisor or coach mentor in order to learn the coaching process or enhance and develop their coaching skills.

Conflict of Interest: A situation in which a coach has a private or personal interest sufficient to appear to influence the objective of his or her official duties as a coach and a professional.

Part Two: The ICF Standards of Ethical Conduct

Section 1: Professional Conduct at Large

As a coach, I:

- 1) Conduct myself in accordance with the ICF Code of Ethics in all interactions, including coach training, coach mentoring and coach supervisory activities.
- 2) Commit to take the appropriate action with the coach, trainer, or coach mentor and/or will contact ICF to address any ethics violation or possible breach as soon as I become aware, whether it involves me or others.
- 3) Communicate and create awareness in others, including organizations, employees, sponsors, coaches and others, who might need to be informed of the responsibilities established by this Code.
- 4) Refrain from unlawful discrimination in occupational activities, including age, race, gender orientation, ethnicity, sexual orientation, religion, national origin or disability.
- 5) Make verbal and written statements that are true and accurate about what I offer as a coach, the coaching profession or ICF.
- 6) Accurately identify my coaching qualifications, expertise, experience, training, certifications and ICF Credentials.
- 7) Recognize and honor the efforts and contributions of others and only claim ownership of my own material. I understand that violating this standard may leave me subject to legal remedy by a third party.
- 8) Strive at all times to recognize my personal issues that may impair, conflict with or interfere with my coaching performance or my professional coaching relationships. I will promptly seek the relevant professional assistance and determine the action to be taken, including whether it is appropriate to suspend or terminate my coaching relationship(s) whenever the facts and circumstances necessitate.
- 9) Recognize that the Code of Ethics applies to my relationship with coaching clients, coachees, students, mentees and supervisees.
- 10) Conduct and report research with competence, honesty and within recognized scientific standards and applicable subject guidelines. My research will be carried out with the necessary consent and approval of those involved, and with an approach that will protect participants from any potential harm. All research efforts will be performed in a manner that complies with all the applicable laws of the country in which the research is conducted.

11) Maintain, store and dispose of any records, including electronic files and communications, created during my coaching engagements in a manner that promotes confidentiality, security and privacy and complies with any applicable laws and agreements.

12) Use ICF Member contact information (email addresses, telephone numbers, and so on) only in the manner and to the extent authorized by the ICF.

Section 2: Conflicts of Interest

As a coach, I:

13) Seek to be conscious of any conflict or potential conflict of interest, openly disclose any such conflict and offer to remove myself when a conflict arises.

14) Clarify roles for internal coaches, set boundaries and review with stakeholders conflicts of interest that may emerge between coaching and other role functions.

15) Disclose to my client and the sponsor(s) all anticipated compensation from third parties that I may receive for referrals of clients or pay to receive clients.

16) Honor an equitable coach/client relationship, regardless of the form of compensation.

Section 3: Professional Conduct with Clients

As a coach, I:

17) Ethically speak what I know to be true to clients, prospective clients or sponsors about the potential value of the coaching process or of me as a coach.

18) Carefully explain and strive to ensure that, prior to or at the initial meeting, my coaching client and sponsor(s) understand the nature of coaching, the nature and limits of confidentiality, financial arrangements, and any other terms of the coaching agreement.

19) Have a clear coaching service agreement with my clients and sponsor(s) before beginning the coaching relationship and honor this agreement. The agreement shall include the roles, responsibilities and rights of all parties involved.

20) Hold responsibility for being aware of and setting clear, appropriate and culturally sensitive boundaries that govern interactions, physical or otherwise, I may have with my clients or sponsor(s).

21) Avoid any sexual or romantic relationship with current clients or sponsor(s) or students, mentees or supervisees. Further, I will be alert to the possibility of any potential sexual intimacy among the parties including my support staff and/or assistants and will

take the appropriate action to address the issue or cancel the engagement in order to provide a safe environment overall.

22) Respect the client's right to terminate the coaching relationship at any point during the process, subject to the provisions of the agreement. I shall remain alert to indications that there is a shift in the value received from the coaching relationship.

23) Encourage the client or sponsor to make a change if I believe the client or sponsor would be better served by another coach or by another resource and suggest my client seek the services of other professionals when deemed necessary or appropriate.

Section 4: Confidentiality/Privacy

As a coach, I:

24) Maintain the strictest levels of confidentiality with all client and sponsor information unless release is required by law.

25) Have a clear agreement about how coaching information will be exchanged among coach, client and sponsor.

26) Have a clear agreement when acting as a coach, coach mentor, coaching supervisor or trainer, with both client and sponsor, student, mentee, or supervisee about the conditions under which confidentiality may not be maintained (e.g., illegal activity, pursuant to valid court order or subpoena; imminent or likely risk of danger to self or to others; etc) and make sure both client and sponsor, student, mentee, or supervisee voluntarily and knowingly agree in writing to that limit of confidentiality. Where I reasonably believe that because one of the above circumstances is applicable, I may need to inform appropriate authorities.

27) Require all those who work with me in support of my clients to adhere to the ICF Code of Ethics, Number 26, Section 4, Confidentiality and Privacy Standards, and any other sections of the Code of Ethics that might be applicable.

Section 5: Continuing Development

As a coach, I:

28) Commit to the need for continued and ongoing development of my professional skills.

Part Three: The ICF Pledge of Ethics

As an ICF coach, I acknowledge and agree to honor my ethical and legal obligations to my coaching clients and sponsors, colleagues, and to the public at large. I pledge to comply with the ICF Code of Ethics and to practice these standards with those whom I coach, teach, mentor or supervise.

If I breach this Pledge of Ethics or any part of the ICF Code of Ethics, I agree that the ICF in its sole discretion may hold me accountable for so doing. I further agree that my accountability to the ICF for any breach may include sanctions, such as loss of my ICF Membership and/or my ICF Credentials.

Adopted by the ICF Global Board of Directors June 2015.

(ICF Global Board of Directors, 2015).

Appendix 4: Consent form



Kasvatustieteellinen tiedekunta, Helsingin yliopisto
PL 9 (Siltavuorenpenger 1 - 5)
00014 Helsingin yliopisto

OSALLISTUJAN SUOSTUMUS TUTKIMUSAINEISTON KERUUSEEN JA AINEISTON TUTKIMUSKÄYTTÖÖN

Annan suostumukseni aineiston keruuseen ja haastatteluun, joka liittyy Kim Stenvallin Pro Gradu –työhön Helsingin yliopistolla. Ymmärrän, että haastattelun tavoitteena on kerätä Pro Gradu aiheeseen liittyvää materiaalia. Osallistumalla myötävaikutan arvokkaalla tiedolla tutkittavaan aiheeseen.

Osallistuminen sisältää n. 45 minuutin pituisen haastattelun. Keskustelu nauhoitetaan ja transkriboidaan analyysin mahdollistamiseksi. Haastattelun aikana tehdään myös muistiinpanoja. Kun henkilötiedot on poistettu aineistosta, kerätty aineisto tallennetaan ja säilytetään salasanasuojatulla yliopistopalvelimella. Kun kaikki aineisto on analysoitu ja tulokset raportoitu, materiaali tuhotaan.

Haastattelut ovat anonymoivia eli yksittäisten vastaajien henkilöllisyys ei tule ilmi tutkimusten raportoinneissa. Osallistumiseen ei liity riskejä tai negatiivisia seurauksia. Osallistuja voi vetäytyä tutkimuksesta missä tahansa vaiheessa. Osallistujalla on myös oikeus olla vastaamatta johonkin tiettyyn kysymykseen. Tutkimusaineiston pohjalta voidaan kirjoittaa sekä tieteellisiä että yleistajuisia artikkeleita, joissa voidaan käyttää suoria lainauksia varmistaen osallistujien anonymisyys.

Kaikkea kerättyä materiaalia käsitellään huolellisesti, luottamuksellisesti ja haastateltavien integriteettiä kunnioittaen. Kim Stenvallin ja hänen ohjaajan, professori Sami Paavola, lisäksi kenelläkään muulla ei ole pääsyä muistiinpanoihin, tallenteisiin tai transkriboituun materiaaliin, jotka liittyvät haastatteluihin.

Lisätietoja antaa tarvittaessa Kim Stenvall, kim.stenvall@helsinki.fi, 040 7680142.

OSALLISTUJAN SUOSTUMUS TUTKIMUSAINEISTON KERUUSEEN JA AINEISTON TUTKIMUSKÄYTTÖÖN

Päiväys ja paikka
Allekirjoitus _____
Nimen selvennys _____
Suostumuksen vastaanottajan allekirjoitus ja nimen selvennys

Tästä suostumuslomakkeesta on annettu allekirjoitettuna omat kappaleet sekä suostumuksensa antajalle, että suostumuksen vastaanottajalle.